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PLANNED PARENTHOOD AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY:  
ATTITUDES OF METHODIST SOCIAL CONCERNS LEADERSHIP

by

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

There can no longer be any doubt that the world is faced with a growing threat which religious leaders have only recently begun to recognize as crucial. This growing threat is over-population. As the threat has become more and more obvious, the controversy over means of limiting population has grown more and more heated. Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies have clashed openly over the issue of family planning perhaps more vigorously than over any other single issue in recent years. While theologies clash, the population continues its ominous climb upward.

### THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It has been the purpose of this research (1) to explore the implications of world population growth for Christian theology; (2) to evaluate the principle Protestant theological arguments concerning the various means of contraception in family planning; (3) to suggest areas of responsibility which might be undertaken by the Protestant church; and, (4) to present the attitudes of the leaders in the field of Christian social concerns in Methodist annual conferences across the nation, with regard to the population explosion, the use of contraception, and the role of the church in the area

of population control and family planning, as revealed through a questionnaire study.

Importance of the study. In dealing with the crucial issue of family planning, Protestant churchmen have continually been at a disadvantage in that there has not been any clear formulation of the theological foundation for the Protestant position on family planning. The Roman Catholic position seems quite firmly based in a clear-cut theological understanding, but Protestantism has lacked any widespread, easily understandable theological explanation of marriage, sex within marriage, and family planning. Then too, as the Methodist Church becomes more and more concerned with the population problem and family planning, action programs will be initiated by boards and agencies for use on the annual conference and local church levels. The success of these programs will depend largely on the attitudes of annual conference social concerns leaders. If the General Board of Christian Social Concerns of the Methodist Church can have some prior indication of the attitudes of these leaders on whom they depend, they can more successfully plan and implement the action programs needed.

#### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Population explosion. The term "population explosion" refers to the rapidly increasing population of the



world. This term and its significance will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two.

Conception control. We have chosen to use the term conception control in preference to the more widely used term "birth control." Birth control implies much more than is included in the scope of this study. Abortion, infanticide, sterilization, artificial insemination, and other related problems all fall within the scope of birth control. While these are significant problems in their own right, they are not the focus of this research. Conception control refers to the deliberate attempt on the part of a married couple to plan conception to avoid pregnancy. The terms family planning and responsible parenthood are used interchangeably to indicate the goals of conception control.

Marital sex act. This term, along with coitus or coition, is used to describe the actual physical union of male and female reproductive organs. It is used in place of the more widely used and more ambiguous term, sexual intercourse, which can be understood as being any type of interaction between sexual beings.

Contraception. This term will be used exclusively to indicate the methods used in conception control. Contraception refers to both the so-called "natural" methods approved by Roman Catholic moralists and to the scientific or "artificial" methods approved by Protestants but

rejected as immoral by Roman Catholics.

#### ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THE DISSERTATION

The remainder of the dissertation consists of two major sections. The first of these sections, chapters two through four, presents introductory material providing a background helpful to an understanding of the questionnaire study presented in the latter section. It should be noted that in the first section, the three chapters each deal with one of the three areas of concern lifted up in the questionnaire study.

Chapter two is an outline of the current status of world population. The problem of over-population and the implications of the problem for the Christian church are thoroughly discussed. Some suggested solutions to the problem of the world's exploding population are set forth and discussed as to their relative merits.

Chapter three explores the theological implications for the Protestant position that family planning through the use of contraception is an acceptable solution to the population problem. After a brief look at the view of sex and marriage in the Bible and in the developing Christian church, some important contemporary theological views are presented. This chapter concludes with an attempt to formulate a personal theology of sex and theology of contraception.

Chapter four suggests some areas of responsibility on the part of the Protestant church in this area of family planning and world population. The relationship of Protestant organizations with non-Protestants, the preparation of ministers, and church support or sponsorship of community organizations as well as research studies are all discussed.

The second section of the dissertation consists of chapters five through seven.

Chapter five serves as introduction to the questionnaire study and presents major hypotheses, research methodology, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter six is a presentation and analysis of the data collected in the study with special emphasis on the readiness of respondents to support and promote denominational programs in the area of family planning.

Chapter seven presents a summary of the findings and some conclusions growing out of the entire study. The appendix contains a copy of the questionnaire and the cover letter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WORLD'S EXPLODING POPULATION

The problem. The world of the twentieth century is faced with a growing threat which it has only recently begun to recognize as crucial. That growing threat is over-population. There are those who consider the problem of our rapidly increasing population as the most important problem we as a people now face. Dr. Warren O. Nelson of the Population Council and Rockefeller Institute states that, "It far outranks any problem facing the world today."<sup>1</sup>

With the possible exception of Thomas Malthus it has only been in recent years that any real attention has been given to the problem of our rapidly increasing population. Today, however, the cry of religious leaders of virtually every denomination, political leaders throughout the world, medical men, and economic experts of widely varying systems can be heard as they appeal for an acceptable solution to the rapid increase in the world's population. Why has the issue suddenly become so crucial? It has become crucial not because of any scholarly demographic theory but rather because of factual census data such as the following supplied in the Population and Vital

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Dwight McMaster, The World's Exploding Population (Kennebunk, Maine: The Star Print Co., 1961), p. 3.

Statistics Report of the United Nations.

TABLE I  
WORLD POPULATION<sup>2</sup>

| Area        | Estimated<br>Population<br>for 1960 | Actual<br>Population<br>mid-1962 | Projected<br>Population<br>for 2000 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Africa      | 237,000,000                         | 269,000,000                      | 517,000,000                         |
| N. America  | 197,000,000                         | 276,000,000                      | 312,000,000                         |
| S. America  | 206,000,000                         | 153,000,000                      | 592,000,000                         |
| Asia        | 1,620,000,000                       | 1,780,000,000                    | 3,717,000,000                       |
| Europe      | 424,000,000                         | 434,000,000                      | 568,000,000                         |
| Oceania     | 16,300,000                          | 17,000,000                       | 29,300,000                          |
| U.S.S.R.    | 215,000,000                         | 221,000,000                      | 379,000,000                         |
| World Total | 2,915,300,000                       | 3,150,000,000                    | 6,114,300,000                       |

Figures such as those above mean little until they are brought to life as they are in the following illustration from Dr. Richard Fagley.

At the time that Jesus walked among men, the world's population may have totaled 300 million persons, concentrated principally in the Mediterranean basin, India and China. . . . During the present generation from 1930 to 1960, the increase in the world's population will be approximately 900 million, or three times the total of the New Testament period. This increase of 30 years, moreover, may be twice as large as the global total at the time of the Reformation. This is the population explosion.<sup>3</sup>

Another eminent scholar who is gravely concerned with our exploding population is Dr. John Rock, who describes the population explosion graphically when he says:

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<sup>2</sup>Population and Vital Statistics Report, Department of Economic Affairs, United Nations, New York, XV (October, 1963), 5.

<sup>3</sup>Richard M. Fagley, The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 15.

Some 800,000 years were required for humanity to achieve a current population of three billion. But the second three billion will be added in the next forty years--a period only about 1/20,000 as long.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of overwhelming statistical data such as that presented above, there are still groups, until recently the Roman Catholic Church among them, who maintain that the rate of world population growth is not great enough to cause alarm. Dr. Richard C. Bradley, Assistant Professor of Physics at Cornell University, in a letter to the editor of the New York Times, is critical of those who maintain there is no serious population explosion.

Here is a simple calculation which may interest anyone who dismisses the threat of over-population.

Take the world population at mid-century (about 2 billion), take the present doubling rate (once every 50 years), and project the population indefinitely into the future. . . . Before ten centuries will have passed, our descendants can count on having 200,000,000,000 neighbors--which is slightly more than the number of square feet of land surface on the earth, including the South Pole, the Sahara Desert, and Mt. Everest.

If at that time they are still inclined to dismiss the problem, let them sit tight for yet another thousand years; there will then be 2,000,000 people per square foot. (Tennis, anyone?)<sup>5</sup>

With this kind of factual census data and scientific projections, it seems inconceivable that we should continue to ignore the importance of finding a solution

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<sup>4</sup>John Rock, The Time Has Come (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Letter to the editor in the New York Times, January 13, 1960.

to the problem at the earliest possible moment. The implications of this problem are extremely far-reaching. Dr. Bradley pointed out in his letter the rapid way in which the number of people is passing the amount of inhabitable square footage of land in the world (and even Dr. Bradley's figures are conservative). The problem is, however, not alone one of lack of land on which to live. It involves much more. Some of the problems this vastly increased population will present are almost unimaginable to us. Population pressures can and, I am certain, do increase international tensions and contribute to hostility between nations. We can only speculate the difficulties the increased population would bring in the areas such as juvenile delinquency, adult crime, transportation, housing, recreational needs, and so on.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty involved with the population increase is the matter of feeding the world's billions. In India:

The population is so dense that in Calcutta alone, thousands of people live on the streets, sleeping, eating, washing and dying there. Many of the children of India eat only 4 meals a week.<sup>6</sup>

If the population of India increases at the anticipated rate, that country "would sink into a horrifying state of starvation, disease and anarchy."<sup>7</sup>

Efforts to meet the increasing need for food to

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<sup>6</sup>McMaster, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

feed the hungry peoples of the world have been hampered by the very population in need of the food.

Rampant population growth actually obstructs efforts to increase food production, United Nations experts point out, because of the pressure of people on the land which might otherwise be turned to agricultural use.<sup>8</sup>

It is also true that the problem of a food supply which cannot keep up with the demands of an increasing population is not limited to any one area of the world.

Nearly all of the underdeveloped countries are in this condition of exploding expansion, . . . for while the death rate has been cut with startling speed, largely by medical and public health measures introduced by the industrialized West, the birth rate has not been substantially reduced.<sup>9</sup>

Here, then, we come to one of the basic causes of this population explosion. The advance of medical science in recent decades has made it possible for more people to live longer. The period of child-bearing has not increased, but the mortality rate at birth, both of infant and mother, has been drastically reduced. In other words, we have learned how to control death, how to save life and prolong life, but we have lacked foresight in not anticipating and preparing to meet the problems which our improved technology has brought about.

The population explosion cannot be ignored. It is of major importance to the welfare of the world. Dr. Alan Guttmacher suggests that even the threat of the atomic

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<sup>8</sup>Rock, op. cit., p. 14. <sup>9</sup>McMaster, op. cit., p. 6.



bomb must take a back-seat to the problem of over-population. He says:

If world population growth continues as now charted, it requires no scientific genius to see that the result will be even more catastrophic than the havoc that can be wrought by atomic bombs. People will be existing shoulder to shoulder, with insufficient food, packed in living quarters like sardines in a can, and all the parks and fields and open spaces crowded with teeming mobs. Privacy, the privilege of being alone to contemplate, will be legendary pleasure of the historic past.

I believe that atomic bombs, though they would be more merciless to our generation, probably would be much kinder to future generations than the explosion of the population bomb.<sup>10</sup>

There must be a way of dealing with the problem of over-population today, for tomorrow will be too late. Various solutions have been suggested, and we turn now to an investigation and analysis of some of these suggested solutions.

Solving the problem. Among the solutions to the population problem which have been suggested, we can see at least three separate categories. They are the do nothing policy, the population reduction policy, and the population control policy.

There are still some optimists who would have us believe that if we do nothing, if we simply let nature take her course, the population problem will solve itself. The claim has been made that as our population grows,

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<sup>10</sup>Alan F. Guttmacher, Babies by Choice or by Chance (New York: Doubleday, 1959), p. 76.

nature will compensate for that growth by yielding more of her secrets to the probing mind of man. They say that the situation will take care of itself through industrialization, the opening of new lands to cultivation, new scientific advances in food production techniques, the tapping of new food resources, and so on. When examined more closely, however, this theory has some serious weaknesses.

These arguments seem plausible until we begin to look at matters quantitatively. To accelerate food production so that it can keep pace with human reproduction will take skill, great amounts of capital and, above all, time--time to clear tropical forests, construct huge dams and irrigation projects, drain swamps, start large-scale industrialization, give training in scientific methods, modernize systems of land tenure and, most difficult of all, change traditional habits and attitudes among the bulk of the people. And quite simply there is not enough skill or capital or time available. Population is always catching up with and outstripping increases in production.<sup>11</sup>

We can already see that this optimistic, "do-nothing" theory is not working out. As we consider the plight of the many underdeveloped countries of the world, we find that quite the opposite is true. The millions of starving Chinese, Indians, and Latin Americans, to name a few, will testify that nature is neglecting them in her solution to the population problem.

Others have suggested that nature will take care of the problem by keeping the population at a certain level.

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<sup>11</sup>Thomas Malthus, Julian Huxley, and Frederick Osborn, Three Essays on Population (New York: Mentor Books, 1960), p. 66.

Floods, famine, earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, plague, and so on, have been suggested as the ways in which nature will keep the world's population from getting out of control. This so-called solution has proven over the course of history that it cannot keep the population in check. The solution of natural disasters is not acceptable on a moral basis since it implies a reduction of the population rather than control of it. It would also have to be rejected on the basis that disasters have simply not kept pace with population growth. Even wars and freeways seem to be relatively ineffective at holding the population at a constant level!

Science could conceivably hold the answer to our problem in the notion that someday we will be migrating to other planets. Perhaps increased emphasis on the space race will enable us to send our population overflow to another planet. This would certainly alleviate the crowded conditions which we will so soon face. There are some problems connected with this proposed solution, however. Dr. Bradley says:

Just to maintain the present status quo we would have to export 100,000 persons each day (present daily net increase). Assuming each person weighs 150 pounds and is permitted to carry an additional 50 pounds of food, clothes, and knick-knacks, we find that the Asian cargo comes to about 10,000 tons--approximately the size of a liberty ship.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Letter to the editor in the New York Times, January 13, 1960.

Even if this problem could be overcome, migration to other planets would pose many more.

. . . even if, at some future date, emigration to Mars should become feasible, even if any considerable number of men and women desperate enough to choose a new life under conditions comparable to those prevailing on a mountain twice as high as Mt. Everest, what difference would that make? In the course of the last four centuries quite a number of people sailed from the Old World to the New. But neither their departure nor the returning flow of food and raw materials could solve the problems of the Old World. Similarly the shipping of a few surplus humans to Mars (at a cost for transportation and development of several million dollars a head) will do nothing to solve the problem of mounting population pressures on our own planet.<sup>13</sup>

This proposed solution must be seriously questioned as it does not recognize the immediacy of the problem, nor does it attempt to eliminate the problem, but simply to live with it.

The problem of over-population could probably be solved if as much money, time, and investigation were to go into research for population control as has gone into research for extending the life span and reducing the infant mortality rate. Science, it would seem, should feel some responsibility in this regard since the population problem has resulted from their technological advances. Perhaps science could develop an inexpensive pill of some sort, which, when taken once a week or once a month, would provide man all the nourishment needed for

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<sup>13</sup>Aldous Huxley, Brave New World Revisited (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), pp. 11-12.

normal health and growth. The problem with this suggestion is that we have absolutely no guarantee that this kind of a pill can or will ever be developed. Then too, it does not begin to solve the problem of over-crowding which is equally as important as the problem of food.

The population problem is more immediate than any of these solutions admit. Julian Huxley reminds us:

The most dangerous period lies in the next thirty or forty years. If nothing is done to bring down the rate of human increase during that time, mankind will find itself living in a world exposed to disastrous miseries and charged with frustrations more explosive than any we can now envision.<sup>14</sup>

Is there no remedy to this problem? Perhaps Huxley has hit upon the real answer in his suggestion that the rate of human increase must come down. We must be able to control the growth of population by controlling conception.

Everything points to one conclusion. While every effort must be made to increase food production, to facilitate distribution, to conserve all conservable resources, and to shame the "have" nations into a fairer sharing of the good things of the world with the "have-nots," this alone cannot prevent disaster. Birth control also is necessary, on a world scale and as soon as possible.<sup>15</sup>

From the standpoint of efficiency and immediacy, conception control appears to be the only hope against the rapidly mounting population of the world. It meets the first requirements in that it recognizes the problem exists and attempts to deal with it, and it is something which can

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<sup>14</sup>Malthus, op. cit., p. 67.    <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

be done now, immediately, to prevent a further explosion of population about which nothing could be done two or three generations hence. Conception control or contraception has raised some serious moral and theological questions which must be faced before it can be completely acceptable as an answer to the population problem. To a consideration of these questions we must now turn.

## CHAPTER III

### A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR CONTRACEPTION

Any attempt to formulate a foundation in theology for the use of contraception in family planning needs to follow a pattern of logical development. We need first to deal with the historical attitude toward marital sex within the framework of the Christian church. To this end we turn to a study of the Biblical view of marital sex, and then trace the sexual attitudes of the developing Christian church up to the present day. We need next to look briefly at the history of contraception and attitudes toward it. The final step prior to setting forth a theology of contraception is the clear formulation of a Protestant theology of the sex relationship within marriage. To this arduous task we now turn.

The Biblical view of sex. In the religion of the Israelites prior to the period of the prophets, the sexual function of man was regarded as a part of the supernatural force which pervaded nature. The Israelites regarded sex as a deep mystery because it was quite obviously a part of God's creation which itself was surrounded with mystery. The sexual function provided a vivid example of the unity of relationship which the Israelite sought. In the performance of the sex act itself, man and woman were seen as complementary, or essentially belonging to each other.

Otto Piper points out that:

Sexual desire is itself regarded as a kind of magical power; in the act of its satisfaction this power flows mutually from each to the other and changes both parties so that neither is self-sufficient without the other.<sup>1</sup>

The act of sex was regarded as a divine requirement, and whenever the requirement was fulfilled a change in man's essential being was brought about.

It is clear from this discussion that the Hebrew attitude toward sex was a positive one. Sex was not something which should be regarded as evil. On the contrary, sex was a part of the order of God's creation and thus was essentially good. In his excellent book, Sex and Love in the Bible, William G. Cole suggests:

. . . the Old Testament sees sexuality as a fact of creation. It is not the result of a fall, a rupture in the created order, but a feature of the divine will. "Male and female he created them" Thus the Bible stands eternally opposed to any and all efforts to make of sex something evil or subspiritual. It is God's word and God's work that are responsible for human sexuality, which is therefore good.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the intended purpose of marital sex, the Hebrews believed that sex was the mysterious route provided by God for the continuance of life on earth. The fact of pleasure in sex was provided so that all men would be led into fulfilling the divine requirement in Genesis

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<sup>1</sup>Otto A. Piper, The Christian Interpretation of Sex (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>William G. Cole, Sex and Love in the Bible (New York: Association Press, 1959), p. 272.



1:22, to "Be fruitful and multiply." There can be little doubt that procreation was considered to be the first purpose of marital sex, and for this reason marriage was highly regarded. Among the Jews, marriage was held in relatively high esteem, however, not primarily for its relational value, but because it was the means of continuing the chosen race.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean to imply that the relational value in marital sex was lightly regarded. On the contrary, the foundation for a modern Protestant theology of sex is found in the Old Testament doctrine of "henosis" or the union of man and woman. This concept will be discussed fully later in this paper. Suffice it to say here that the Hebrews looked to marital sex as a means of establishing and maintaining a meaningful relationship with God, as they shared with him in creation. It was largely because of this view of sex that Hebrew law was filled with regulations and prohibitions which dealt specifically with matters sexual.

Perhaps the best summary of the Old Testament concept of sex is Cole's suggestion that the Old Testament throughout expected marriage of all, assumed that marriage meant coitus, and that both pleasure and children would result.<sup>4</sup> The primary purpose of sex was procreation, but

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<sup>3</sup>Derrick Sherwin Bailey, The Man-Woman Relation in Christian Thought (London: Longmans, Green, 1959), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Cole, op. cit., p. 285.

for the Hebrews this did not involve a denial of the pleasures of sex.

With only slight modification the Old Testament conception of marriage still held in the Judaism of the New Testament period. We find very little in the teaching of Jesus to alter the traditional Old Testament notion of sex and marriage. Virtually the only mention of the man-woman relation in the teachings of Jesus dealt with the question of divorce and remarriage. As with so many other elements in life, sex, for Jesus, was to be treated from the viewpoint of the function it had in the divine plan of salvation. Later Christians pointed to the fact that Jesus apparently felt that it was unnecessary to marry since he did not take a wife. It is important to remember, however, that Jesus lived under the hope of the imminent eschatological end of the age, and for him and for his followers marriage and sex were not of ultimate importance.

Cole outlines the situation in the early Christian church with these words:

. . . the new age which had been inaugurated by the life and death and resurrection of Christ had radically called into question all human institutions, marriage among them. It was no longer necessary or even "normal" that all the chosen people of God should marry. It was no longer a calamity to be a virgin or a childless wife. Celibacy was in the new aeon a gift of God, as was marriage. . . . No man in the church was "alone," as Adam was, and therefore did not require a wife. Nor did he require offspring to carry on his name and line, to continue the chosen people

of God so that their "name should not be blotted out." One's community was no longer his family; it was the church, wherein all who do the will of God were his brothers and sisters, father and mother, husband and wife. When the kingdom finally comes, there will be neither marriage nor giving in marriage. But . . . the New Testament in no way disparages matrimony. On the contrary, it exalts it to a new state of sanctity.<sup>5</sup>

The Apostle Paul is the only clear New Testament exponent of this attitude toward sex which Cole describes. There can be little doubt that in Paul we find an ascetical bias and the exaltation of virginity as a religious ideal. In the seventh chapter of First Corinthians, where the vast majority of Pauline teaching on sex is to be found, we cannot escape the obvious implication that celibacy is to be preferred to marriage. Even so, Paul recognizes the importance of sex among those already married when he reminds the Corinthians of their marriage duty and urges them not to refrain from sex for too long unless it is absolutely necessary. His apparent justification for sex is that it is far better to engage in marital sex activity than to "be aflame with passion."

Too often we remember only Paul's emphasis on the superiority of celibacy and forget his very positive attitude toward marital sex. D. S. Bailey reminds us:

The Apostle denies that coitus is, as the Corinthians would have it, merely a detached and (as it were) peripheral venereal function involving no more than an appropriate exercise of the genital organs. On

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 286-87.

the contrary, he insists that it is an act which, by reason of its very nature, engages and expresses the whole personality in such a way as to constitute an unique mode of self-disclosure and self-commitment.<sup>6</sup>

Even while we are aware of this attitude of Paul, we cannot escape his very real prejudices in this area. More important than his biases are his reasons for them. Like Jesus, Paul believed that the end of the world was very close at hand. He also believed that the end "would be preceded by a time of troubles in which 'the man of lawlessness, the son of perdition' would reign and rage."<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the fewer earthly concerns binding any Christian, the freer he would be, the more he would be prepared for the day of judgment. If the end of the world was imminent, why be married? In the world to come, it would not make any difference, according to Paul, so better to remain unmarried as he himself was. Paul had good reason for his emphasis on the superiority of the celibate state. Unfortunately, later Christianity forgot his reasons but remembered his bias. As Joseph Fletcher says, "They forgot their dream that this wicked world was coming to an end, but they never forgot St. Paul's implied glorification of virginity."<sup>8</sup>

In spite of the fact that there appears nowhere in

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<sup>6</sup>Bailey, op. cit., p. 10. <sup>7</sup>Cole, op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Fletcher, Morals and Medicine (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), p. 78.

the Bible a systematic treatment of sexual matters, we can draw an important conclusion from those passages which do refer to sex. In the Bible there are at least three important justifications for sex within marriage. The Old Testament emphasis is on the necessity and importance of the continuation of the chosen people of God as a divine command. However, the importance of the unitive function of sex, the relational value of two becoming one, cannot be overlooked. In the New Testament the unitive function has retained its significance, the procreative function has decreased in importance, and a third purpose, that of fulfilling sexual desires in a God-ordained manner, is added by Paul. Sex is an important part of God's created world, and as such it is basically good. Its positive function is called into question only when it appears that the world is very near an end.

Sex attitudes in the developing Christian church.

In the years subsequent to Paul, the growing church developed the Pauline bias toward asceticism but tended to disregard his positive attitude toward marital sex. The rigors of asceticism became the way of the man truly given in complete devotion to God. As Cole says:

. . . by the time of Augustine in the fourth century A. D. two points had been firmly established within the Christian tradition: first, that virginity and

celibacy were superior to marriage; and second, that the only religious justification for sex was procreation.<sup>9</sup>

During this Patristic Age, Augustine was the outstanding spokesman for the Christian church. In his attitude toward sex, Augustine went one step beyond the commonly held view of the superiority of celibacy to marriage. He insisted that every act of coition ought to be procreative in intention, or the couple would be guilty of mortal sin.

St. Augustine . . . in his On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin, declared all carnal lust to be sinful. Marriage was justified on the basis that the evil of sexual lust was turned to good through the procreation of children. The scales of good and bad were balanced upon intent. So long as husband and wife toiled at procreation no sin was involved.<sup>10</sup>

Augustine represented the general view of the Church Fathers who also held that marriage was a concession to man, "a remedy against the pressure of venereal desire, and a refuge for the weaker souls."<sup>11</sup>

In the Middle Ages sexual matters were treated more systematically by Christian theologians and, in most cases, more positively. The notion that coition had been created as essentially good but had been corrupted by the Fall grew out of a sexual interpretation of the Israelite

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<sup>9</sup>Cole, op. cit., p. 295.

<sup>10</sup>John Clover Monsma (ed.), Religion and Birth Control (New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Derrick Sherwin Bailey, Sexual Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 25.

creation myth. The evil of marital sex was not the responsibility of man and woman but resulted from one particular instance of moral evil, the Fall. Thus, the sex act was not sinful when it took place as God had appointed, that is, between husband and wife.

In a spokesman like Thomas Aquinas, the Middle Ages reaffirmed the primacy of the procreative function of coitus. In fact, by this time the notion that marital sex might have unitive or relational function had been completely dispelled. Aquinas expressed the opinion that any sex act which does not have as its intention procreation, or from which procreation cannot follow, is a sin ranking with homicide, since the generation of offspring is impeded. On the whole, however, the Middle Ages saw progress in the attitude of the Church toward matters sexual.

Medieval sexual thought was certainly saner and more liberal than that of the preceding age, and less often displayed extravagant emotional prejudice. But it was too much concerned with forms and externals, and too little with relation; and although it modified or elaborated the Christian sexual tradition in various ways, it did not appreciably change either the character or the tendency of that tradition.<sup>12</sup>

The first and principle topics to engage the Reformers of the sixteenth century were clerical celibacy and the vows of continence required by the Church. In the Reformers these came to be regarded as contrary to divine law. Martin Luther, for instance, completely rejected the

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

notion that divine favor could be won through chastity or celibacy. He called the idea a delusion. Luther advised monks and nuns to abandon their vows of virginity and celibacy as he himself had done, on the basis that such vows were contrary to the will of God as revealed in the Bible.

In some respects the Reformers did not differ to a great extent from the Church which they were attempting to reform. While rejecting the rigid asceticism of the Catholic Church, they held onto the idea of celibacy as justified if due to a special calling of God. The religious orders were abolished, and the prohibition of marriage for the clergy was set aside, but the idea of celibacy as a response to a specific call of God was not altogether abandoned.

While Luther held to the superiority of marriage over celibacy or virginity, John Calvin thought that there was intrinsic merit in virginity and that it was superior to marriage. On the matter of sex in marriage, however, Calvin was more liberal than Luther. For Calvin, coition was something holy and marriage was a high calling, although not as high as virginity. Speaking of Calvin, D. S. Bailey says:

While he did not deny that generation is a special and characteristic end of matrimony, he taught also that its chief purpose was social rather than procreative. Where Luther tended to see woman as a bearer of children and a divinely appointed means of venereal relief



for man, Calvin insisted that she was created, not merely to be the companion of his bed and the keeper of his house, but rather to be the inseparable associate of his whole life and work--though both maintained her subordinate status.<sup>13</sup>

In Reformers like Luther and Calvin, we begin to see the emergence within the Protestant tradition of a higher estimation of marriage and a deeper understanding of sexual relation.

Within a few years after the death of Luther, however, the Roman Catholic Church reiterated its position in the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

. . . the Catechism gave three reasons why God instituted marriage at creation. First, mutual support and companionship between the sexes; second, the desire for procreation . . . and third, as a medicine for immorality.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, however, the procreative function of marital sex was clearly considered to be primary in that:

. . . married persons, who, by medicine, either prevent conception or procure abortion are guilty of a most heinous crime; for this is to be considered an impious conspiracy of murderers.<sup>15</sup>

That sex attitudes in the modern world were, and continue to be, influenced by the Christian tradition cannot be questioned. The negative attitude toward the pleasure aspect of sex, the positive attitude toward

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>14</sup>William G. Cole, Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 96.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

renunciation of sex in favor of the ascetic life, and the notion of the superiority of the male over the female have all contributed to a relatively low view of marriage and marital sex which has only been seriously challenged by Protestants in recent years. After looking briefly at the history of contraception, we shall deal more directly with some contemporary Protestant views of sex.

Contraception in history. From the beginning of the earliest human beings, man has attempted to control conception. Anthropologists have established that both magical and rational methods were employed by primitive tribes. According to Norman St. John-Stevas in his report to the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, entitled Birth Control and Public Policy, Plato wished to restrict procreation to men between the ages of thirty and thirty-five and women ages twenty to forty. Aristotle also recommended the legal regulation of conception and approved both abortion and infanticide.<sup>16</sup>

Within the Christian church, the negative attitude toward contraception was greatly affected by the biblical story of Onan. In the 38th chapter of Genesis the story is told of Onan, who obediently followed Israelite law and married the childless widow of his deceased brother. When

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<sup>16</sup>Norman St. John-Stevas, Birth Control and Public Policy (A Report to the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara, California: The Fund for the Republic, Inc., 1960), p. 5.

it came to giving his new wife a child, however, Onan resorted to the most ancient and universal of all methods of contraception, withdrawal, or coitus interruptus. Whenever he had intercourse with his sister-in-law, he withdrew before orgasm and spilled his semen on the ground. As a result of his action, according to the story, God slew Onan.

Many Christians, and especially the Roman Catholics, have interpreted this story as a divine condemnation of conception control. Some scholars have argued against this interpretation on the basis that Onan was punished for his violation of the levirate law and not because he practiced coitus interruptus. This view is not tenable, however, since the evasion of levirate duty by public refusal carried no penalty other than social contempt. It is more likely that Onan was punished for the method he employed to avoid his duty. His sin was not that he avoided conception but that he destroyed his semen.

Here we meet again the ancient misconception that semen is actually "seed"--the essence of a human being in fluid form. Onan did not merely waste or misuse his semen, but "killed" it; in other words, he committed an act that amounted to constructive murder, but for which the community could exact no penalty--hence the attribution of his death to the hand of God.<sup>17</sup>

With this explanation in mind we conclude with Bailey that the Onan story, "has no bearing upon contraception as a

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<sup>17</sup>Bailey, Sexual Ethics, op. cit., p. 126.

method of family planning, and that no exegetical ingenuity can make it relevant."<sup>18</sup> With the exception of the Onan story, there is no clear biblical reference to contraception.

As we have already seen, the attitude of the early Christian church toward marital sex was that the sex act had one purpose only, and that was procreation. In the Patristic Age, Augustine insisted that every act of sexual intercourse ought to be procreative in intention, otherwise sin was incurred. In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas branded the use of "evil appliance" to prevent propagation as a mortal sin.<sup>19</sup> With this attitude widespread in the early Church it is easily understandable that contraceptive research was seriously impeded.

In eighteenth century Europe the use of the condom or sheath became fairly widespread, especially in brothels. The condom was the invention of one Gabriele Fallopio, whose treatise on venereal disease, De Morbo Gallico, was published in 1564, two years after his death. This treatise contained the first published account of the condom.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, contraceptives were still associated exclusively with immorality and vice, but by the close of the nineteenth century "this

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Monsma, loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup>St. John-Stevas, op. cit., p. 6.

position had been deeply undermined and the way prepared for the general acceptance of contraception which has been so marked a feature of our own time."<sup>21</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, the theories of the Anglican, Thomas Malthus, became widespread. In his Essay on the Principle of Population, Malthus decried the rapidly increasing world population and the rapidly decreasing food supply. In the second edition of the book, Malthus proposed that the problem could be solved by "moral restraint." By this he meant not restraint of the marital sex act, but rather that marriage should be postponed to a late age or avoided altogether. He roundly denounced artificial contraception, but in spite of this denunciation, his theories gave rise to the modern birth control movement.

Malthus' warning against over-population opened the door to a crowd of birth control advocates, and for several years the movement grew rapidly. In 1873, however, Anthony Comstock, a Protestant, induced the United States to pass a statute excluding contraceptives and contraceptive information from the mails and declaring them to be obscene. The work of this puritannical Protestant resulted in similar statutes in many of the several states.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the legal complications, birth control

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

crusaders remained active, especially in the United States. Perhaps the most famous of these crusaders was Margaret Sanger, who devoted her life to advocating birth control causes. Mrs. Sanger's major interest was not in the population problem, as such, but focused on the laborious, destructive, unending cycle of child-bearing for the woman who did not use some means of controlling conception. During the first half of the twentieth century, Mrs. Sanger and others like her worked diligently to have the federal and state statutes relating to birth control repealed and spent considerable time in jail as reward for their efforts.

To this day, federal statutes, and several state statutes, still prohibit the dissemination of contraceptive information or devices.

Private persons importing, mailing, or transporting contraceptives purely for the purpose of preventing conception, with no medical intentions for their employment, would still, at least theoretically, be caught by the statutes.<sup>23</sup>

In spite of these laws, the attitude toward contraception today is generally one of approval.

The courts have modified the operation of federal statutes, and most state statutes have been liberally interpreted. Hundreds of different types of contraceptives are in use, and contraception has become big business. In April, 1958, Robert Sheehan estimated that the contraceptive trade in the United States grossed \$200,000,000 a year, no less than \$150,000,000 being spent on condoms.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

The differences which permit anti-contraception laws to remain on the books are largely political and doctrinal. In the present study we are concerned primarily with the doctrinal differences. With this background in the history of contraception, we are now prepared to examine these doctrinal differences.

Foundations for a theology of marital sex. We shall undertake two investigations in this section. First, we will try to come to an understanding of the significance of sex in the male-female relationship and, secondly, we will explore the question of the purpose of the marital sex act. Among contemporary Protestant theologians Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Derrick Sherwin Bailey have spoken most clearly on the nature of sex.

It seems to me that Karl Barth returns to the earlier described Old Testament concept of sex as a dynamic part of the ordered creation. He sees the sexual nature and sexual function of man as an integral part of man's nature. The sexual impulse and drive is not to be disregarded as either something unimportant or inherently evil. The performance of the sexual function is very much like the performance of the eating, drinking, sleeping tasks of the human animal. Obedience to the divine command of God is the essence for Barth, and fulfillment of the individual in the sexual aspect of the marital state

is an important part of that command.

Man is the spirit-impelled soul of his body in his sexuality as in his physical eating, drinking or sleeping. The point at issue in the command of God is that in everything, and therefore in his sexuality, man himself, the spirit-impelled soul of his body, should be obedient.<sup>25</sup>

In the light of the divine command, the question involved in sex is a question of the whole man. Sex can only be seen as obedience to the divine command as it is carried out in the fulfillment of the relationship of man and woman. In other words, a physical sexual life existing in and for itself, physical sexual needs and their satisfaction in physical sexual intercourse as an independent happening complete and intelligible in itself, is contrary to the divine command.

Concern with obedience to the divine command in this respect means that:

Sex and its relationship should have no independent life, that they should not determine, decide and control, that they should not constitute an independent totality, but have their essence solely and exclusively in the freedom of man, of male and female and their encounter and coexistence.<sup>26</sup>

The meaning of the call to freedom inherent in the divine command requires no liberation from sex, nor does it require any denial or repression of sex. It does require that the physical sexuality of man should form an integral

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<sup>25</sup>Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), III, 133.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 131.



part of his total humanity as male or female, and that the completion of the sexual relation should be integrated into the total encounter of man and woman.<sup>27</sup> The command of God claims the whole man, and the sexual nature and relationship is no exception.

Marriage, for Barth, is that which fixes and makes solid the relationship between man and woman, and this relationship must be grounded in mutual love. He summarizes his view as follows:

Marriage may be defined as something which fixes and makes concrete the encounter and inter-relation of man and woman in the form of the unique, unrepeatable and incomparable encounter and relationship between a particular man and a particular woman. Their encounter and relationship signifies in this context a life partnership. This partnership is not partial but complete. . . . And the characteristic motive for this resolve and act is on both sides a choice of love . . . .<sup>28</sup>

This is not to infer that marriage is to be built on love, but rather grounded in love. In this Barth disagrees with Emil Brunner who maintains that, "Where marriage is based on love, all is lost from the very outset."<sup>29</sup> Like Barth, Brunner sees sex in the divine order only as it relates to fulfillment of the whole man. He sees it as a part of nature which is more than simply sexual functioning and involves also a responsible

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 131-32.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>29</sup>Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947), p. 344.

personal existence. Sex becomes impure or evil for Brunner when it is separated from this concept of the nature of man. Sex becomes an evil when it becomes sex for the sake of sex.

The evil in the life of sex is the isolated function, which manifests its hostility to the Divine order by reducing the awful process of procreation and sexual union to a mere trifle.<sup>30</sup>

Brunner contends that marriage is necessary because it serves as a preventive measure against unlicensed sexual activity. He regards erotic sexual pleasure which is uncontrolled as one of the great dangers for the life of the individual and the life of society. Marriage serves as a controlling agent, and sexual activity is at least more controlled than it would be without marriage. On the other hand, asceticism is not the superior way of controlling the sexual impulses and drives. This is an unnatural suppression of a natural drive and function and leads to psychological unbalance in many cases. This, too, provides a good reason for the institution of marriage.

In spite of the way it may sound, Brunner does regard marriage as sacred.

From the hand of the Creator do I first receive my partner in marriage as "mine," and through this become "his" or "hers." This is the order of Creation in marriage; therefore although not a Sacrament, . . . marriage is a sacred thing.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 349.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

Brunner regards marriage as desirable but not necessary. He abandons the idea of perpetual chastity or virginity as an unnatural condition but does not hold that it is necessary to be married in order to fulfill the will of God. He does contend, however, that because of its procreative nature, marriage and the utilization of the sexual aspect of marriage are absolutely necessary if we are to enjoy full humanity.

D. S. Bailey looks to the act of the creation of man and woman as the creation of "One dual 'being,' . . . consisting of empirically distinct yet correlative personal components, one male and the other female."<sup>32</sup> He goes on to make the point that:

Each, though completely and autonomously human, postulates and is naturally oriented towards the other, so that together they are impelled to realize their mutual belongingness as the constituent elements of Man in the many forms of relationship through which sexual fulfillment can be achieved--and chiefly that of union as one flesh in marriage.<sup>33</sup>

With regard to the role of love in marriage, and thus in the sexual relationship, Bailey chooses to express his concepts in the familiar terms of Martin Buber. Bailey contends that insofar as a couple participate in an I-Thou relationship with one another, they participate in an I-Thou relationship with eternity, with God. Without

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<sup>32</sup>Bailey, The Man-Woman Relation, op. cit., p. 271.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

this experience of meeting in personal relation, which would be impossible if the other is nothing more than an object, an It, there can be no love. He says, "When the falling in love is mutual, the lovers communicate to each other a vision of God who is the end of their love and their life."<sup>34</sup>

The final step in the relationship of mutual love is the establishment of the "one-flesh" union. When one person sees the other as a Thou, God is revealed through the other, and God is seen as perfect.

Not only is the vision a revelation, through the beloved to the lover, of the perfection of God; it is also a means whereby both experience God, for their love is rooted in their relation with him.<sup>35</sup>

Sex provides the means of a divine fulfillment of the blending of male and female as two become one through henosis, union in one flesh. Insofar as the I-Thou relationship has been established and is consummated in the act of coitus, God is revealed in the act. In this sense, marital sex can be a means of the grace of God, and Bailey thus holds out for the sacramental nature of genuine sexual encounter.

Bailey's attitude toward sex is summed up in these words:

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<sup>34</sup>Derrick Sherwin Bailey, The Mystery of Love and Marriage (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 17.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

. . . sex in Man is more than a mere faculty or attribute--much more, certainly, than a generative or venereal phenomenon. In the race, it is a divisive factor separating humanity into two radically different yet mutually complementary elements--male and female; in the individual, it is an informing and governing principle which permeates his being to its depths, and conditions every facet of his personality and his life.<sup>36</sup>

Before we move to a consideration of the purpose of the marital sex act, let us look briefly at Seward Hiltner, Helmut Thielecke, and William G. Cole. Hiltner suggests that:

Through sex one comes to "know" another, and thereby to know something of the secret of his own existence. The use of the term "know" as a synonym for sexual intercourse is not a matter of delicacy. Through sex, one discovers something he can explore in no other way.<sup>37</sup>

The relational or unitive function of sex is likewise of ultimate significance to Helmut Thielecke. Writing in the Christian Century, he says:

. . . the sexual encounter that takes place in the marriage, and certainly the children who issue from it "mark" the two partners and make them the "one and only" for each other, so that they exist for each other and become a part of each other's destiny.<sup>38</sup>

William G. Cole would stand with Bailey on the matter of the importance of sex as the means of establishing the one-flesh relationship between man and woman.

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<sup>36</sup>Bailey, The Man-Woman Relation, op. cit., p. 269.

<sup>37</sup>Seward Hiltner, Sex and the Christian Life (New York: Association Press, 1957), p. 35.

<sup>38</sup>Helmut Thielecke, "Realization of the Sex Nature," The Christian Century, LXXXI (January 15, 1964), 76.

. . . the purpose of sex in man is the achievement of what the Bible calls "one flesh." Every sexual act, however casual or even commercial, at least points toward the most intimately personal relationship between two persons. . . . Sex at its best, that is when it fulfills its inner essence and purpose, is the union not simply of two bodies, but of two persons. A sacrament is defined as the outward and visible sign of an inner and invisible state, and in that sense sex is sacramental, symbolizing in dramatic form the blending of two into one.<sup>39</sup>

With this discussion in mind, let us turn now to a consideration of the very important question of the purpose of marital sex. A theology of contraception hinges on the way in which this question is answered.

It is possible to view the object of the marital sex act in at least three different ways. The first is that the sex act is provided either exclusively or primarily for the procreation of children. The second is that the object of the sex act is mutual expression of love or the establishment of the one-flesh union as well as procreation. The final view which we shall consider here is that the sex act is performed primarily for the mutual expression of love or the establishment of the one-flesh union and only secondarily to procreate offspring.

That the sex act is at least in part designed for purposes other than procreation seems to be self-evident. Emil Brunner points out that:

The very fact that the human need for sex expression is not limited to definitely short periods but is a

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<sup>39</sup>Cole, Sex in Christianity, op. cit., pp. 296-97.

permanent need, indicates that this, as a characteristic element of human life, is intended by the Creator.<sup>40</sup>

Joseph Fletcher, in his book Morals and Medicine, attempts to support this position with statistics.

The facts seem to undermine the Roman theologians' claim that natural sex aims at reproduction. It appears that by the principle of statistical preponderance, the opposite belief--that nature does not intend conception--is more tenable. In the 28 day menstrual cycle, only about six days are fertile and 22 are infertile. A woman can conceive, generally, from the ages of 14 to 50, or 36 years of 13 cycles each, giving 2808 fertile days in the ovulation periods of her life as compared to 10,296 infertile days. Normal sexuality continues until about 66, thus adding 5850 infertile days to the sexual span, which totals 18,944 days with only 2808 of them, or 1 out of 7, fertile. If we grant that nature implants the sex drive and "intends" intercourse (a concupiscible appetite), and further that nature's "intentions" are evident more in the rule than in the exception, it would follow that nature's purpose in sex is much more to contrive intercourse than conception.<sup>41</sup>

This would seem to contradict the Roman Catholic view that sex in marriage is primarily for the purpose of procreation. It is more logical to conclude that there are other purposes which have at least equal importance with procreation. Among these we would list mutual expression of love or establishment of the one-flesh union as a very important purpose of marital sex. Further, in most instances of coition it would seem that this reason would assume primacy, and that procreation would not become

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<sup>40</sup>Brunner, op. cit., p. 367.

<sup>41</sup>Fletcher, op. cit., p. 95.

primary until the couple desired it to be so. This would seem to be the conclusion of Karl Barth, who says:

Parenthood may be a consequence of marriage which is both joyful and rich in duties, but from a Christian point of view the true meaning and the primary aim of marriage is not to be an institution for the upbringing of children. On the contrary, children may be at least a serious threat to what man and wife should together mean in marriage for the surrounding world.<sup>42</sup>

With regard to the procreative element in sexual intercourse Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, "Human reproduction is a matter of the will to have a child of one's own . . ."<sup>43</sup> Emil Brunner maintains that the Christian ethic needs to point out and hold onto the independent meaning of the sexual aspect of marriage as an expression of love and not merely as a means of procreation.<sup>44</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr recognizes that procreation is most certainly the biological aim of coition, but he asserts the transcendence of the personal and rational over the purely biological.

. . . it is the very character of human life that all animal functions are touched by freedom and released into more complex relationships. This freedom is the basis of both creativity and sin. . . . It is not possible to escape the natural fact that the primary purpose of bisexuality in nature is that of procreation. But it is not easy to establish a universally

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<sup>42</sup>Barth, op. cit., III, 267.

<sup>43</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 131.

<sup>44</sup>Brunner, op. cit., p. 368.



valid "law of reason" which will eternally set the bounds for the function of sex in the historic development of human personality.<sup>45</sup>

One of the best expressions of the relationship of procreation and the other elements of the sex act comes from Hugh C. Warner when he concludes that:

Procreation is seen as an end--or result--of an act which is itself wholly self-explanatory and self-contained. Procreation does not fulfill the classical definition of an "object", i.e. "The object is that at which the action aims and in which it naturally results, and with the attainment of which it is completed." . . . Procreation--or more accurately conception--is a possible result of coitus but not its object.<sup>46</sup>

Even the recognition that the biological aim of marital sex is procreation does not make clear the aim of sex as such, for coition surely has other purposes than purely biological. D. S. Bailey recognizes this difference and tries to make the distinction clear when he says:

Marriage derives its ontological meaning, not from the procreative capacity of husband and wife, but from the sexual love by which they are united in a special and significant personal relation. Intercourse may imply the possibility of procreation, but it means the certainty of union in 'one flesh'. . . . the first purpose for which God calls men and women together is that they may become 'one flesh'.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps it is more accurate to say that marital sex has different purposes rather than that it has a primary

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<sup>45</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 281-82.

<sup>46</sup>Hugh C. Warner, "Theological Issues of Conception," Theology, LVII (January, 1954), 10-11.

<sup>47</sup>Bailey, The Mystery of Love, op. cit., pp. 107-8.

purpose and secondary purposes. Certainly the biological aim of coition is procreation, and so is the social, but in their relationship with one another the couple find the most meaning in the unitive end of sex. David Mace supports this thesis in his book Whom God Hath Joined.

We have seen that the sexual union of married people fulfills two functions--unitive and procreative. From the point of view of society, the procreative is the more important, because it is the guarantee that the stream of life shall continue from generation to generation. But from the point of view of the couple the unitive end is the more fundamental. . . . The view that sexual intercourse in marriage is right only when its purpose is to produce children is a false and mischievous distortion of Christian truth.<sup>48</sup>

Our conclusion, which will be elucidated in the last section of this chapter, is that on the basis of all the evidence, biblical as well as theological, procreation cannot be viewed as the sole purpose for marital sex or as the primary purpose. The mutual expression of human love at a very profound level is also an object of marital sex. Finally, the establishment of the one-flesh relationship is the union of two human beings in which God himself participates. Surely these purposes are of equal importance to, if not more important than, procreation. We agree wholeheartedly with Seward Hiltner who concludes:

A purely reproductive view of sex is not possible if one takes seriously the biblical views on one-flesh

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<sup>48</sup>David Mace, Whom God Hath Joined (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 49.

union, on sex as mystery, on sex as the creation of God, on man's body as fundamental and not peripheral to his nature, and on the freedom of the Christian.<sup>49</sup>

We need now to turn to an investigation of the significant theological questions which surround this matter of contraception.

Opposing theologies of contraception. The contraception conflict has been one largely of theology, the Roman Catholic theology on the one hand and the non-Roman Catholic on the other.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Roman Catholic Church does not disapprove of family planning. "Catholic couples are not required to have children to the utmost capacity of the mother for child-bearing."<sup>50</sup> Two methods of conception control are approved by the Roman Catholic Church. They are abstinence from sexual relations, and the "rhythm method," or sexual relations confined to the so-called "safe" period of each month. Both of these methods involve a giving up of the marital sex act for varying periods. "The most obvious method of restricting birth, and the only way that is not sinful, is to refrain from exercising marriage rights."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Hiltner, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>50</sup>Stanley I. Stuber, Primer on Roman Catholicism for Protestants (New York: Association Press, 1960), p. 138.

<sup>51</sup>George D. Smith (ed.), The Teaching of the Catholic Church (New York: Macmillan, 1960), II, 1092.

The Roman Catholic approval does not extend beyond abstinence and the rhythm method. Any other type of conception control is a grave sin. The position of the Roman Catholic church is stated very clearly in the Papal Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, issued December 31, 1930. In it the Pope states that anything is immoral which violates the natural law of God. With regard to contraception he says:

Since . . . the conjugal act is destined primarily for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power, and purpose sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious.<sup>52</sup>

The Reverend John O'Brien interprets the Pope's message to mean that:

. . . man may not supplant or frustrate the physical arrangements established by God, who through the law of rhythm has provided a natural method for the control of conception. Believing that God is the Author of this law and all the laws of nature, Roman Catholics believe that they are obliged to obey those laws, not frustrate or mock them.<sup>53</sup>

This prohibition naturally eliminates any kind of chemical, mechanical, or other artificial means of conception control.

This position is based, as Pope Pius XI stated in his encyclical, on the belief that the primary end of

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<sup>52</sup>Anne Fremantle (ed.), The Papal Encyclicals (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 239.

<sup>53</sup>John A. O'Brien, "Let's Take Birth Control Out of Politics," Population Bulletin, XVII (November, 1961), 134.

marital sex is the procreation of children, and anything which inhibits this purpose is immoral.

The Roman Catholic natural-law tradition regards as self-evident that the primary objective purpose of the conjugal act is procreation and that the fostering of the mutual love of the spouses is the secondary and subjective end.<sup>54</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church argues that any interference with a natural law, including artificial means of contraception, is a sin.

The most universal and most elementary test in distinguishing between moral good and evil consists in determining whether a human faculty is being used in a natural manner, and in subordination to its natural object. . . . The frustration of the natural purpose of the act of generation is immoral; the immorality consists in gratifying sexual pleasure while frustrating the object of the act.<sup>55</sup>

This stand on the part of the Roman Catholic Church is rooted in the story in Genesis 38, previously discussed, in which God is said to have slain Onan after he practiced coitus interruptus and spilled his semen on the ground. The Catholics have interpreted this to mean that God killed Onan because he practiced contraception and thus violated natural law. Further basis for the Roman Catholic stand is found in the teachings of the fathers, "doctors of the early Church, the unbroken tradition of nineteen centuries, the decisions of the highest ecclesiastical authority and the natural law."<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Smith, op. cit., II, 1089-90.

<sup>56</sup>O'Brien, loc. cit.

Modern Catholic moralists have been more and more willing to accept the fact of population increase as a pressing problem, but they cannot accept the use of methods of conception control other than abstinence or the rhythm method as a moral solution to the problem. As a teaching of the Church, this doctrine is infallible and unchangeable. In spite of their recognition of the problems involved, Roman Catholics are taught that the authority behind their Church's stand on conception control cannot err in matters affecting Christian morals.<sup>57</sup>

Recognition of the need for some means of controlling population growth, however, has brought on a desire on the part of some leading Roman Catholics for a moral substitute for what they regard as immoral means of contraception. Thus, they have greeted the recent proposal of Bishop James A. Pike, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, with great enthusiasm. Bishop Pike proposed that the National Institutes of Health launch a research program to render the rhythm method as simple and effective as any other contraceptive method.<sup>58</sup> In recognizing and accepting this compromise proposal, Catholicism has put forth as its solution to the population problem a program to perfect the rhythm method.

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<sup>57</sup>Smith, op. cit., II, 1092.

<sup>58</sup>O'Brien, op. cit., p. 136.

In summarizing the Roman Catholic view toward conception control, we would include the following important points. Only total abstinence or the rhythm method of conception control are morally and theologically right. Any other type of conception control is a violation of God's will and natural law and a mortal sin. Since there is a serious population problem, and the rhythm method is viewed as the only acceptable means of controlling conception, research should be directed toward making the rhythm method more effective in preventing conception.

Until about the turn of the last century, Protestantism, along with the rest of Christianity, condemned contraception as immoral, unnatural, and contrary to divine law. This attitude is still reflected in the civil laws of this country, as we have previously mentioned, as the result of the work of the puritannical Protestant, Anthony Comstock. Today, however, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches stand virtually alone in condemning conception control through artificial means.

The reasons for the change in attitude on the part of Protestantism have been a new perspective of the meaning and significance of marital sex and a growing awareness of the moral implications involved in permitting population growth to continue unchecked.

In summing up the Protestant position on conception control and family planning, Dr. Dan Potter, Executive

Director of the Protestant Council of Greater New York,  
said:

We believe that parenthood is one of the major purposes of marriage but that the conjugal act itself contributes important spiritual benefits to the happy marriage. Failure to recognize the need for sexual relations in married life, separate from the intention of pregnancy, is a serious error. Family planning practiced in Christian conscience fulfills, rather than violates the will of God.<sup>59</sup>

An even earlier statement on this problem came from the Committee on Marriage and Home of the U. S. Federal Council of Churches in March, 1931.

The committee agreed that sex relations between husband and wife "have their source in the thought and purpose of God, first for the creation of human life, but also as a manifestation of divine concern for the happiness of those who have so wholly merged their lives." . . . The majority of the Committee, believing that abstinence within marriage except for the few is neither satisfactory nor desirable, held "that the careful and restrained use of contraceptives by married people is valid and moral."<sup>60</sup>

In 1931 this represented quite a liberal position and illustrates clearly the careful approach to contraception adopted by Protestant groups.

Another group of Protestants met at Mansfield College, Oxford, in April of 1959. This group consisted of 21 members including theologians, doctors, economists,

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<sup>59</sup>Elizabeth Dwight McMaster, The World's Exploding Population (Kennebunk, Maine: The Star Print Co., 1961), p. 24.

<sup>60</sup>Richard M. Fagley, The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 195.



and students of international affairs. Their report to the World Council of Churches has come to be known as the Mansfield Report, and one of the significant statements read as follows:

. . . there appears to be no moral distinction between the means of contraception now known and practised, by the use whether of estimated periods of infertility, or of artificial barriers to the meeting of sperm and ovum--or indeed, of drugs which would, if made effective and safe, inhibit or control ovulation in a calculable way. It remains that the means employed be acceptable to both husband and wife in Christian conscience, and that, on the best evidence available, they do neither physical or emotional harm.<sup>61</sup>

This statement of 1959 represents a much more positive attitude toward contraception than the one drafted in 1931.

Individual Protestant groups have spoken out on the matter of family planning and the use of contraceptives. The Anglican Church was one of the first to take a definite stand. The Lambeth Conference of 1958, representing the whole Anglican communion, unanimously declared that "the responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the conscience of parents everywhere."<sup>62</sup> Other Protestant groups have taken similar stands, among them the Disciples of

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<sup>61</sup>"A Report on Responsible Parenthood and the Population Problem," Ecumenical Review, XII (October, 1959), 91.

<sup>62</sup>Flann Campbell, "Birth Control and the Christian Churches," Population Studies, XIV (November, 1960), 137.

Christ, the Presbyterians, the American Baptist Convention, the Methodists, and some branches of Lutheranism.<sup>63</sup>

From the theological standpoint, the case for contraception stands or falls on the question of the purpose of marital sex. It follows that if sound theology seems to make clear the primacy of procreation in the sex act, one would have to question seriously the use of contraceptives to control conception. If, however, we understand that marital sex has as its object other ends than strictly procreation and that, in fact, these other ends are at least equal in importance with procreation, then a strong case can be made for the use of contraceptive measures.

Even if procreation is regarded as primary, a case can be made for the use of contraceptives on the basis that sexual activity should not, and in fact is not, limited to those few periods when a child is desired.

D. Leslie Weatherhead spells this out for us in his Mastery of Sex.

. . . I hold most earnestly that the view that intercourse should never take place unless a child is desired is unfounded and false. It is economically impossible for most married people to have more than three or four children. Are we to suppose that the

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<sup>63</sup>The Churches Speak Up on Birth Control, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, New York.

strongest instinct in our personality is only to be physically expressed during three or four periods in a life-time?<sup>64</sup>

If union in one flesh is considered a legitimate object of marital sex, then contraception must be measured in terms of how it facilitates or detracts from that union. In the book in which he holds up the union in one flesh as the most significant aspect of marital sex, The Mystery of Love and Marriage, D. S. Bailey comments on contraception. He says:

For myself, I believe that the use within marriage of contraceptives in no way conflicts with the principles of union in 'one flesh' examined in this study, and may well assist the development of the personal relation between husband and wife.<sup>65</sup>

The principle of marital sex as an expression of love at an extremely profound level must also be examined at the point of how contraceptive devices hinder or enhance that expression.

Another factor which needs to be considered is man's relationship to nature and his ability to exercise a certain amount of control over nature. Even if contraception is admitted to be "unnatural," does this imply that contraception is thereby immoral? Joseph Fletcher suggests that limited control over nature is what makes us people and not simply puppets dancing on the ends of

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<sup>64</sup>Leslie D. Weatherhead, The Mastery of Sex (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 80.

<sup>65</sup>Bailey, The Mystery of Love, op. cit., p. x.

strings controlled by God.

Control by men over their circumstances of action is, along with knowledge of their circumstances, an indispensable part of personal integrity. Knowledge and control are what make the difference between puppets and people. . . . It is not our thesis that in order to be moral a man must be independent of nature. He is, on any realistic and humble view, still a creature of nature, however highly developed his spiritual faculties may become as compared to the rest of the animals.<sup>66</sup>

Responsible control over nature is also to be judged moral or immoral on the basis of the motives or intentions behind the exercise of such control. It becomes important to ask why contraception is employed. For example, concern for the child may for many be an important factor. There is a moral question involved in unlimited child-bearing where personal resources are so limited that children will not have the opportunities for proper upbringing. Writing in Birth Rate and Birth Right, William Vogt says:

Recognizing . . . that we deprive no child, no human being, of anything by not having it, should we not be reasonably confident before we create it that we can give it a good enough life so that it will be glad it was born--in middle age and old age, as well as in youth? Unless we feel such confidence, the act of begetting is the supreme human selfishness.<sup>67</sup>

The possible immorality for some, then, is not in the use of contraception but in the failure to use it.

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<sup>66</sup>Fletcher, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>67</sup>Marian Maury (ed.), Birth Rate and Birth Right (New York: Macfadden-Bartell, 1963), p. 24.

This question of responsibility in parenthood is a very serious one. If God has made us responsible creatures, then are we not to exercise that responsibility in the planning of our families as well as in other areas of life? William E. Hulme thinks that we are. "In birth control the theological issue is . . . whether conception control is not man's responsibility under God as a part of his elevated status above all creatures."<sup>68</sup> Joseph Fletcher also sees parenthood and family planning as a part of our moral responsibility as human beings. It is the responsibility of intelligent choice which becomes ours as the result of our freedom.

With the medical technology of contraception, parenthood and birth become matters of moral responsibility, of intelligent choice. We are able to control our fertility. No longer do we have to choose between reproduction and continence. Sex is no longer a helpless submission to biological consequences.<sup>69</sup>

It seems likely that if a couple exercise responsibility in planning for their children they will also be more responsible parents.

When a person takes the responsibility for conceiving a child, he is likely also to take the responsibility for preparing himself for parenthood. On the other hand, when a couple take no responsibility for controlling conception, they may feel just as irresponsible about preparing for parenthood.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>William E. Hulme, "A Theological Approach to Birth Control," Pastoral Psychology, II (April, 1960), 27.

<sup>69</sup>Fletcher, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>70</sup>Hulme, op. cit., p. 30.

Irresponsible family growth may have other undesirable side effects on parents as well as children. In making a moral decision on the use of contraception, we ought to take into consideration such matters as the health of the mother to bear another child, the possibility of the resentment of parents toward an unwanted child and the resultant attitude of the child, and the possibility that resentful attitudes toward pregnancy may become resentful attitudes toward the sex act itself, thus destroying the relational value of marital sex.

What can we conclude as to the Protestant view concerning the use of contraceptives? In all this we must agree with W. G. Cole that the essential thing about Christian family life, from the Protestant perspective, "is not its quantity but its quality--the community, the love, and the understanding that characterize the common life."<sup>71</sup> This is the Protestant view toward conception control: The use of contraceptive devices in responsible and conscientious family planning is not only sound morally, but sound theologically as well.

Toward a personal theology of sex and contraception.  
As a result of the research undertaken for this study, I am convinced that the significance of the sexual nature of man is to be seen in man's relation to the totality of

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<sup>71</sup>Cole, Sex and Love, op. cit., pp. 302-3.

creation. Sex is one significant aspect of nature, an aspect which is to be used to express love, to establish community, to generate offspring, but never as an end in itself. Like any gift of God, sex can be misused, but responsible sexual expression based on intelligent decision fulfills rather than violates the will of God.

With regard to the object of the marital sex act, I am led to conclude, on the basis of statistical evidence as well as theological speculation, that the procreation of children cannot be held to be the primary aim of coition. Certainly procreation is the biological aim of marital sex, and this is an important part of its object; but to say that procreation is the primary reason for sex has neither biblical nor theological foundation. On the contrary, it is my opinion that the relational value of sex, the establishment of the one-flesh union through this expression of love is the primary object of marital sex, with procreation as a secondary purpose. Procreation becomes primary when the couple consciously desire conception. In all this, however, we dare not forget that procreation is still the biological aim of coition, and this writer is not aware of a contraceptive device which is yet 100 per cent effective. Since we are not yet able to exercise complete control over the biological aspect of marital sex, morality dictates that the responsible use of sex implies that a couple will refrain from marital sex

unless they are willing to accept the possible biological results. Irresponsible sexual activity may result in an unwanted and unloved child, or a child whose needs cannot be met by the limited resources of the parents.

Even among some Roman Catholic theologians the primacy of procreation as the purpose of marital sex has been called into question. Dr. John Rock points out:

Renewed attention has been paid to the purpose of marriage and particularly to the often overlooked fact that Canon 1013 of the Code of Canon Law defines the primary purpose of marriage, not as procreation alone, but as "the procreation and education of children." To many theologians it has become clear that this must be read to mean the proper rearing of children--and that the old admonition to parents to have large families would often make it too difficult, if not impossible, for many parents to accomplish the co-ordinate primary purpose of rearing their children properly.<sup>72</sup>

This only tends to substantiate the current Roman Catholic view favoring responsible family planning. The conflict is not one of objective, but one of method.

The Roman Catholic objection to conception control has arisen from an interpretation of natural law which does not permit man to employ any of his technological knowledge to exercise control over nature. It is difficult to understand, however, why, here in the use of the great power which God has given us to reproduce our own kind, we are to leave the outcome purely to chance. In

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<sup>72</sup>John Rock, The Time Has Come (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 44.



other words, according to the Roman Catholic view, every pregnancy, regardless of the circumstances of the family, is to be regarded as an act of divine providence. Georgia Harkness sums up the major arguments against this point of view in her book Christian Ethics.

In other matters, such as providing for food, clothing, shelter, health, traffic safety, employment, and the like, it is generally accepted that the will of God requires of us rational and responsible action. One who would leave these matters wholly to chance would not be thought to be accepting providence but acting in a foolish if not foolhardy manner! And if in other things care and planning are required, why not in this most important of human events, the birth of a child?<sup>73</sup>

When we carefully evaluate such matters as the health of the mother (or the father as breadwinner), the economic stability of the family, the number of children already a part of the family, the conditions under which the child will be brought up, the possibilities for emotional and physical development, the possibilities for an adequate education, and so on, it seems obvious that this extremely important responsibility of parenthood cannot be left solely to chance.

At this point we must face squarely the fact that every possible method of contraception involves some "unnatural" element. Thus, if we are seeking a method of contraception which is completely subject to nature, we

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<sup>73</sup>Georgia Harkness, Christian Ethics (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 136.

will be disappointed in our search. In attempting to discern the will of God, however, the pressures of current world conditions, the rapidly increasing population, and the need for some effective control, would seem to make it incumbent upon responsible parents to use some means, even though inherently unnatural, to limit the size of their family.

We have already pointed out that the Roman Catholic Church recognizes the need for family planning. We have also seen that the only methods of contraception which they approve are the rhythm method and abstinence. In evaluating the rhythm method as a contraceptive, we must raise the question as to whether the act of abstaining from sexual relations precisely at those times when a woman is most likely to conceive, and participating in marital sex only during those periods when a woman is least likely to conceive, is not a serious violation of natural law if, as the Catholics say, procreation is the primary purpose of marital sex. Helmut Thielecke seems to be asking the same question in this passage from his Ethics of Sex.

. . . it is to be noted that even here a certain intervention in the processes of nature are held to be permissible and that a certain planning of the act

of procreation may be possible. This would make sense only if the procreation of offspring were not the chief purpose of marriage.<sup>74</sup>

If we accept union in one flesh as the basic object of marital sex and if coitus is desired by a couple during a period which is deemed unsafe, then the primary end of coitus is thwarted in deference to the fear of pregnancy when such pregnancy is not desired.

. . . at precisely the time when husband and wife may mutually desire each other, the wife may be in her fertile period. Even affection must be curtailed, lest in fanning the flame of desire, it lead only to frustration.

The rhythm method puts an unnatural pressure on both husband and wife to restrain their desire during one phase of the cycle and just as unnatural pressure to produce these desires during the other phase.<sup>75</sup>

Then too, the question of the "naturalness" of the rhythm method must be raised. Karl Barth poses the question:

Indeed, does the natura intrinseca of the sexual act really remain unaffected when its performance, although quite normal, is cramped by so much calculation which seems open to objection even from the medical standpoint, and by all anxious considerations and obvious fears of the participants?<sup>76</sup>

Barth calls the rhythm method "a painful course with its complicated technique and all the statistics and calculations which it involves."<sup>77</sup> If we judge contraceptive

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<sup>74</sup>Helmut Thielecke, The Ethics of Sex (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 214.

<sup>75</sup>Hulme, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>76</sup>Barth, op. cit., III, 274.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

methods on the basis of their "naturalness," we must seriously question the acceptance of this method.

Another significant point which should be mentioned here is the fact that the rhythm method has proven itself to be extremely unreliable and ineffective. If a couple is continually anxious over whether or not an undesired pregnancy will occur because they are practicing the ineffective rhythm method, this detracts from the relational and expressive functions of marital sex. Speaking about the rhythm method Hulme says:

Once the couple's confidence is shaken in its reliability, the fear of pregnancy with all of its accompanying resentment and guilt descends ominously over the marital act.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, it seems to me, the rhythm method must be seriously questioned on the basis of its ineffectiveness, its restriction of the spontaneity of marital sex, and the possible negative emotional side effects.

Abstinence from marital sex for any extended period of time is neither sound theologically nor morally. Of the few biblical references to sex, one of the clearest is Paul's injunction against refraining from marital sex for too long at a time. If the primary purpose of marital sex is unitive, and expressive, as we have suggested it is, then a strict abstinence from sex out of fear of pregnancy is surely foreign to the purpose of marriage.

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<sup>78</sup>Hulme, op. cit., p. 28.

When we list unnatural methods of contraception, abstinence must be at the top.

We can say at once that whatever its virtues may be in the abstract, continence is not a vocation for normal people. If chastity and childlessness can be held to be a legitimate vocation for normal people, then they are appropriate only to monasteries and nunneries, not to married life, of which the sexual bond and function is an essential feature. The very reason-for-being of marriage is a repudiation of celibacy. Both common sense and psychiatry provide us with strong reasons for minimizing, if not for condemning, abstinence as a method of preventing conception. St. Paul was quite sound in his views.<sup>79</sup>

We certainly could not agree that it is the will of God that a married couple refrain for any length of time from the expression of their love for one another through marital sex because a pregnancy would seriously endanger the health of the mother, or because the family is not in a financial position to adequately feed, clothe, house, and educate another child. Thus, on the basis of its detracting from one of the fundamental aspects of marriage, and the possible negative emotional side effects which can result from unfulfilled sexual desire, we must seriously question the use of prolonged abstinence from marital sex as a contraceptive measure.

Withdrawal, or coitus interruptus, is perhaps the oldest and simplest method of preventing conception. It involves the withdrawal of the male organ before orgasm occurs. We need spend no more time dealing with this

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<sup>79</sup>Fletcher, op. cit., p. 83.

method than it takes to say that it too must be rejected as a method of contraception on the basis that it frustrates, in many cases for both partners, all of the purposes of marital sex previously discussed.

Scientific contraceptives include such methods as the diaphragm, the condom or sheath, chemical suppositories, foams, jellies, and the recently developed oral contraceptives popularly known as "the pill." Of the contraceptive methods which are available to us, these scientific contraceptives are generally more effective and do less to prohibit the accomplishment of the primary purposes of marital sex as we have previously discussed them. Of course there is a relativity of effectiveness in these methods, and for this reason one might question use of the least effective of these methods where fear of pregnancy might cause emotional harm. In tests conducted thus far, the oral contraceptive taken by the woman has proven to be by far the most effective method of contraception now available.<sup>80</sup> When used properly, the oral contraceptive provides protection and peace of mind. It permits the fullest and most spontaneous expression of love, and the most complete degree of union in one flesh may be attained. The high effectiveness of this method

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<sup>80</sup>Alan F. Guttmacher, The Consumers Union Report on Family Planning (Mount Vernon, New York: Consumers Union of U. S., 1962), p. 66.

lessens the fear of an undesired pregnancy which seems to be a negative element of the other methods considered. The possibility of undesirable long range side effects as a result of prolonged use of the oral contraceptive does not indicate the pills should be avoided, but rather that they should be taken following carefully a doctor's orders. One very positive side effect is the fact that the pills help overcome infertility; and when a couple who have been using the pills as a contraceptive are ready to have children, the woman is generally able to conceive more easily than if she had not taken the pills.

From all the preceding discussion we are led to conclude that the theological implications of marital sex and contraception are clear. Procreation cannot be viewed as the primary object of marital sex. On the other hand, the expression of mutual love and the establishment of union in one flesh are the major purposes of marital sex. Thus, every act of coition is not intended to end in conception. Christian couples are called upon to act responsibly to plan their families so that they bring into the world children who are wanted, loved, and who can be given the basic necessities of life. This responsible family planning necessarily involves the use of contraception to control conception. Of the various methods of contraception now available, the scientific contraceptives, and especially the oral contraceptive, are the soundest on

both a theological and moral basis. The choice of a contraceptive, however, remains a matter of Christian conscience for the couple involved. Our conclusion could perhaps be summed up in the words of Clarence Senior of Puerto Rico. "Presumably, God gave men both sexual organs and intelligence. The latter should be used at least as often as the former."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Quoted in Fletcher, op. cit., p. 37.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

What of the Protestant Church and this matter of planned parenthood? What is the responsibility of the individual minister? How can local churches and local ministers respond to the need for planned parenthood which has now become so clear? Let us turn now to an attempt to answer these very important questions.

Cooperation with non-Protestants. The most significant deterrent to widespread contraceptive information is the Roman Catholic Church. While forbidding as immoral for her own members any means of contraception other than temporary or permanent abstinence from sexual relationships, the Church insists on imposing this condemnation on non-Catholics as well. Thus, planned parenthood clinics or agencies which offer advice other than abstinence are considered immoral by the Roman Catholic Church. Great pressure can be and is brought to bear against those who attempt to establish and maintain such clinics.

The problem herein raised for Protestants is not one of attempting to change the position of the Roman Catholic Church. We need to recognize that the prohibition against "artificial" means of contraception is for that church a matter of moral law and cannot and will not ever be changed. In an article in the Saturday Evening

Post, Dr. John Rock quotes Father John O'Brien who makes the irrevocability of the Catholic stand quite clear:

"Many people like to believe that the Catholic teaching on birth prevention can be changed. This error rests on the confusion between the moral and ecclesiastical law. A thousand years from now we may be eating meat on Friday, but at the same time murder, adultery and contraception will still be sins. These latter involve God's law, and not even the Pope or a large number of sinning couples can turn wrong into right."<sup>1</sup>

The possibility of a reinterpretation of this stand on the part of the Roman Catholic Church is a very real one. Such a reinterpretation, in this writer's opinion, would permit limited acceptance of some new developments in conception control but will never permit acceptance of the "artificial" contraceptives already in use.

The problem before Protestants is not how can we change the Catholic position, but how can we work in the field of planned parenthood side by side with the Catholics in the light of their stated position? There is some indication that a new spirit of cooperation is arising among Catholics on this point, and we Protestants must be ready to respond positively to any constructive proposal offered by them. Dr. Rock and others have proposed a harmonious relationship between Catholics and Protestants in the establishment of public planned parenthood agencies

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in John Rock, "It Is Time to End the Birth Control Fight," The Saturday Evening Post (April 20, 1963), 11.

and clinics.

In urging Catholics to be more tolerant of the non-Catholic position and to cease their efforts to block public dissemination of contraceptive information and devices to those who desire it, Dr. Rock states:

The basis for an equitable public policy on birth control lies in an honest and forthright examination of where family planning fits appropriately into publicly financed programs. Instead of attempting to draw distinctions which are untenable, Catholics would be better advised to sit down with their Protestant and Jewish colleagues and work out the details of a sound public policy for all publicly financed programs -- hospitals, health departments, welfare services, foreign-aid programs, and medical research.<sup>2</sup>

Rock urges an interdenominational cooperation which would see Protestants and Catholics working side by side in disseminating information on conception control methods to people of all faiths at their request. In other words, the Catholic Church should cooperate in public planned parenthood agencies and clinics so that Catholics can receive current information on the rhythm method while non-Catholics are receiving information on the method of conception control of their choice. As Dr. Rock says:

We can choose either to formulate policy peacefully and with deliberation or to engage first in a series of damaging battles before the same essential policy is adopted. Which course we choose will depend on our maturity as Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and, if I may say so, human beings.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>John Rock, The Time Has Come (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

It would also be my hope that a cooperative public policy in the area of planned parenthood would include technical and financial assistance to other countries who request such help. Thus far not a single penny has been appropriated through the United States government for assistance in family planning, even in instances where countries have requested such help. In terms of solving the problem of world population growth, this is an area of vital concern. In the matter of over-population the United States has to be its brother's keeper.

Planned parenthood agencies and clinics. As we look to the future of the planned parenthood movement, one of the bright spots is the formation and growth of planned parenthood clinics and agencies serving lower income families. While these public volunteer agencies are still few and all too far between, they are nevertheless being formed in a few of the larger cities across the nation.

Writing in Concern, Don C. Shaw says:

It is quite safe to say that in most communities throughout our nation, the denial of family planning services in public health and welfare is due more to Protestant apathy than to any obstructionist tactics of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>4</sup>

While the private agencies are increasing, the fact remains, they will not be able to meet the need alone. The real solution must be in family planning through

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<sup>4</sup>Don C. Shaw, "Social Welfare and Family Planning," Concern, V (October 15, 1963), 7.

public welfare agencies.

The major problem confronting a group of concerned citizens who wish to see the development of planned parenthood assistance is the stubborn opposition of those individuals and groups in the community who are blind to the great need for this kind of service. As a result, planned parenthood cannot be associated with Community Chest or United Fund campaigns. If a planned parenthood agency is to survive, it must depend on the contributions of private individuals and groups and the very little it receives in fees.

In an interview with Mrs. Edith Jones, a registered nurse and the chairman of the Pasadena Planned Parenthood Clinic in Pasadena, California, I learned the startling fact that of the thousands of individuals served by this Clinic every year, fewer than two per cent are referred to the agency by clergymen.<sup>5</sup> Further, a group of interested ministers in the Pasadena area has formed a Ministerial Association to aid the Clinic but has been almost totally inactive. The reason for this inactivity is due largely to the fact that while these ministers are sincerely interested in helping, they have no sense of direction, no clear idea of what there is to be done and what they

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<sup>5</sup>Interview with Mrs. Edith Jones, Chairman, Pasadena Planned Parenthood Clinic, Pasadena, California, August 19, 1963.

can do.<sup>6</sup> As a result of this interview with Mrs. Jones and the research done for this study, I have formulated the following propositions.

Preparation of ministers. In the first place, this matter should become a part of the curriculum of our seminaries. As we prepare ministers to serve the people of their churches, we need to make a concerted effort to prepare them to meet every possible need. There can be no doubt that information and counsel in the need for, availability of, and use of methods of conception control are greatly needed by many couples within our churches as well as outside them. These people should be able to turn to their ministers for help with this problem which can, and so often does, underlie other problems which a couple might be having. As we prepare a minister in the field of pastoral counseling, we should also prepare him to give conception control advice and information to those so obviously in need.

Then too, ministers need to be made aware of the extent to which this problem permeates the relationship of husband and wife. Briefly, here are a few of the facts a minister should be able to share with his concerned parishoner. There is something which can be done about limiting and spacing the arrival of children without

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

giving up the joys and pleasures of marital sex. When properly used, the methods of conception control approved by medical doctors are perfectly safe to the health of the children and to possible future children. The moral and theological questions have been previously discussed. This is the kind of information which should be available to parishoners through their minister. It is only through the proper type of seminary training that our ministers will be adequately prepared to meet the task.

The minister who through seminary training is aware of the great need for planned parenthood information will also be concerned with organizing support for community planned parenthood agencies and clinics. Because of their almost total dependence on private contributions, these agencies need the support of community groups such as local churches. With a concerned congregation, guided by a concerned and informed minister, private planned parenthood agencies may have some chance for survival.

When we talk of support for planned parenthood agencies and clinics, we mean both financial support and the support which comes through volunteer workers willing to give their time to assist others who come to the agency out of their need. If the church is really convinced of the need for this type of agency, it will remember to include financial support for the agency in its annual missions or social concerns budget. The concerned

minister will encourage members of his congregation to support the agency by volunteering to serve in some capacity.

Establishing planned parenthood clinics. In view of the fact that there are so relatively few agencies already established, the more probable responsibility of a concerned minister and congregation will be to help establish a planned parenthood agency or clinic in their community. One of the easiest ways to take the first step in the process of establishing such an agency is, according to Mrs. Jones, to work with the city or county department of health in setting up a well-baby or well-child clinic at a local church or school. At this clinic families of inadequate financial means bring their babies or small children to be examined free of charge by physicians who are willing to volunteer their services. As a part of this clinic, a table is set up with prominent signs announcing the fact that planned parenthood information is available.<sup>7</sup> Once the need is established as the result of such a clinic, it becomes a much easier task to recruit community assistance for establishing a local agency.

Where it is not possible to organize a publicly supported agency, planned parenthood service through a

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.



private agency could provide a beginning.

Sex education. Another area of local church responsibility is that of sex education. One of the reasons contraception ignorance is so widespread is that there has been so little in the way of sound sex education coming from any quarter, but its absence is especially conspicuous in the churches. If we begin now to properly educate teen-agers in matters sexual, when they marry, their attitudes toward responsible family planning and the use of contraceptives will result from genuine knowledge and not from gossip or old-wives tales.

The mission of the church. Another extremely important area of concern is the Christian mission field. In view of the reluctance on the part of our government to assist other countries in their family planning and population control, the responsibility of the Christian church in this regard becomes even more significant. A part of the work of the missionary should be to provide counsel and information on the use of effective and inexpensive methods of contraception. Working with doctors or medical missionaries, the missionaries representing the Protestants in America should be adequately prepared to meet the needs of the people in his field of mission whatever they may be. This should include family planning techniques through control of conception. To this end we suggest that missionaries be adequately trained in this matter,

and that missions budgets be extended to include the dissemination of contraceptives through trained missionaries.

Denominational studies. One final suggestion is that as denominations we need to sponsor church-wide studies of both the population explosion and planned parenthood for Protestant families. Virtually all the major Protestant denominations have taken a stand in favor of planned parenthood. They have recognized the seriousness of the population explosion and the need for an immediate solution. They have recognized in conception control a simple and moral way of limiting world population growth and maintaining individual family stability, but they have done absolutely nothing about it! Perhaps a denomination sponsored program in this area would encourage local ministers and congregations to move forward without any further delay. It is my hope that the Protestant churches will lead the way in this important struggle against the surging population. We must agree with Frederick Osborn when he states:

The vital job of balancing population to resources can be done by family planning by individual couples on a voluntary basis, in the framework of an advancing civilization. It is not inevitable that population be balanced by starvation, plague and war, in the framework of barbarity and concentration camps. The task

will require all the brains, all the sincerity, all the sense of purpose which you can muster. But I know it can be done.<sup>8</sup>

There can no longer be any doubt that the church has a tremendous responsibility in meeting the needs of people to be actively concerned with this matter of providing planned parenthood information and assistance to those who desire it. It is my hope that increasing responsibility will be accepted by Protestant denominations and individual churches and ministers as we move closer to complete cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church and with administrators of public welfare funds. Our lack of concern as churchmen has held back needed progress in this area all too long.

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<sup>8</sup>Frederick Osborn, "The Contribution of Planned Parenthood to the Future of America," Eugenical News Quarterly (September, 1963), 82.

## CHAPTER V

### DESCRIPTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY

It is the great hope of this writer that as a result of this and other research in related fields, Protestant denominations will be stirred to action on this very important population and family planning problem. As a member of the Methodist Church, I am hopeful that the Methodist General Board of Christian Social Concerns will begin to take positive forward steps in informing and stirring to action members of Methodist churches across the country.

To this end, and with the financial assistance of the Division of Temperance and General Welfare of the General Board of Christian Social Concerns of the Methodist Church, I undertook to survey the membership of annual conference Boards of Christian Social Concerns as to their knowledge about the population problem, their attitude toward and knowledge of conception control and contraceptive methods, and their readiness to support and promote action programs on their annual conference level which originate at the General Conference level. The basis for this survey is that the success of General Conference programs is largely dependent on social concerns leaders on the annual conference level. If annual conference leaders are aware and convinced of the need for

such an action program and are willing to support and promote such a program, the program has a much greater chance for success. On the other hand, if leaders on the General Conference level are aware of the knowledge and attitudes of annual conference leaders, they can more capably plan and implement action programs which will have a good chance of being successful on a church-wide basis.

Major hypotheses. The questionnaire study was undertaken to test the following hypotheses:

1. In general, Methodist social concerns leaders are not significantly aware of the extent or the implications of the population explosion. This is due, in part, to the fact that over-population is not usually a problem associated with the United States, but is thought of only in distant terms.

2. Given the opportunity to rank social problems as to the importance of their solution, Methodist social concerns leaders will not rank world population growth significantly high. This is largely due to the lack of personal identification with the problem of over-population.

3. The vast majority of Methodist social concerns leaders have a very positive attitude toward the use of contraceptives in family planning.

4. For most Methodist social concerns leaders the use of contraception in general and the use of specific

methods of contraception are not questions of morality. To use or not to use contraceptives in family planning is not a moral question.

5. In general, Methodist social concerns leaders are in agreement with their denomination's official position on the use of contraceptives in family planning.

6. The relative effectiveness of contraceptive methods is not a matter of common knowledge among social concerns leaders in the Methodist Church. This is especially true in the case of the newly developed oral contraceptives and the long accepted rhythm method.

7. Leaders in the field of social concerns in the Methodist Church are quite generally ready to support and promote General Conference programs in the fields of population explosion and planned parenthood.

8. There is no significant difference in the readiness to support and promote church-wide programs dealing with the population explosion and/or planned parenthood on the part of Methodist social concerns leaders on the basis of jurisdiction, position in the church (layman or minister), sex, or age. The one exception to this is the southern jurisdictions. The Central, South Central, and Southeastern jurisdictions are significantly less ready for this kind of program than are the jurisdictions in the north and west.

Research methodology. In order to secure responses

from Methodist annual conferences in all parts of the nation, it was decided that questionnaires should be sent to as many annual conferences as possible. With the assistance of Dr. Richard Edgar of the Division of Temperance and General Welfare of the General Board of Christian Social Concerns of the Methodist Church, the names and addresses of the chairmen of each of the 97 annual conference Boards of Christian Social Concerns in the Methodist Church in America were secured. A personal, individually typed letter was sent to each of these chairmen requesting a copy of the mailing list of their board members. Two follow-up letters at two week intervals were sent to urge cooperation of those who had not responded. Ultimately, 76 mailing lists were received. Thus, 78.35% of Methodist annual conferences in America are represented in this survey.

The random sample. Once access had been gained to the mailing lists of the 76 annual conference Boards of Christian Social Concerns, the writer drew from them a 33.33% random sample of the members. This was done by taking the name of every third member directly from the mailing lists. Each of the lists was separated into a list of ministers and a list of laymen. Care was taken to see to it that one-third of the ministers and one-third of the lay members from each conference were selected for the survey. The first selection from each list alternated

between the first, second, and third names on the lists. By this procedure a mailing list of 869 names was obtained. The questionnaire was mailed to these persons in November, 1963.

The mailed questionnaire. The research instrument used in this study was a pretested, printed questionnaire which was mailed to the 869 persons in the selected sample. Careful consideration was given to the methods of questionnaire construction. The questionnaire went through five revisions under the guidance of the writer's faculty committee. Prior to the final revision the questionnaire was tested on a group of 43 adult members of the St. Matthew's Methodist Church in Hacienda Heights, California, where the writer serves as associate minister. None of these people were in the group who finally received the questionnaire.

The envelope which was sent contained the questionnaire, the cover letter, and a business reply envelope for convenient return. Each questionnaire was individually numbered under the guise of a printer's form number in order that follow-up requests for return of the questionnaire could be made only to those individuals who had not responded. Recipients of the questionnaire were assured that their responses would be treated anonymously, and this confidence was carefully respected throughout the study. At three week intervals a follow-up letter and



then a post card were sent to urge those who had not responded to return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible.

The scale. The writer designed a scale to measure the readiness of respondents to support and promote church-wide programs in the fields of population explosion and planned parenthood. It consisted of questions 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 in the questionnaire. Question 19 was a supplementary indication of readiness but was not included in the scale. The sum of the scores on these questions was derived for each respondent. This was designated as his "readiness score."

For each question the respondents were asked to check one of five responses. The scoring weight given to each response was as follows: for question 9: Strongly Disagree (+2), Disagree (+1), No Opinion (0), Agree (-1), Strongly Agree (-2); for questions 12 through 17: Strongly Agree (+2), Agree (+1), No Opinion (0), Disagree (-1), Strongly Disagree (-2). The questions which comprised the scale were:

9. The church can play no significant role in solving the problem of the world's over-population.

12. The Methodist Church should support the work of reputable planned parenthood agencies and clinics.

13. Methodist ministers should receive seminary training preparing them to give planned parenthood information and advice to those couples desiring it in pre-marital or marital counseling.

14. The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of the population explosion and its implications for Christians.

15. The Methodist Church should strive to establish planned parenthood agencies and clinics where such a service is not available.

16. Methodist Annual Conference pronouncements should more frequently include resolutions in the field of world population problems.

17. The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of planned parenthood for Christian families.

The "readiness score" calculated from the response to these seven questions had a possible range from -14 to +14. Individual scores were tabulated in a threefold division: very ready, ready, and somewhat ready. Respondents with scores from +8 to +14 were classified as very ready, those with scores from +1 to +7 as ready, and those with scores from -14 to 0 as somewhat ready.

Other sections of the questionnaire. Other sections of the questionnaire were designed to find the respondents' knowledge of the population problem and their attitudes toward and knowledge of conception control and specific methods of contraception. A copy of the questionnaire is reproduced in the appendix.

Response to the questionnaire. In view of the fact that the percentage response to mailed questionnaires normally ranges between 10 and 50 per cent, the response

gained in this study can be considered excellent.<sup>1</sup> Of the 869 questionnaires mailed, 611 were returned. This is a percentage response of 70.31 per cent. Moreover, all returned questionnaires were sufficiently complete to be used in the study. Table II gives complete information on the number and percentage of questionnaires sent and returned on the basis of the six Methodist jurisdictions. It will be noted that there was a consistently high rate of return except for the Central Jurisdiction (the non-regional unit into which the Methodist Church organizes Negro churches over most of the country). While the percentage of replies from this Jurisdiction is still good, the number of mailing lists provided was also low, leaving a comparatively small sample from this Jurisdiction. The limitation this imposes on the study will be indicated below.

Statistical analysis of the data. The responses to the seven questions which were included in the "readiness" scale were subjected to chi square analysis. In the case of the "readiness score," the test of the significance of difference between means was used. The conventional 5 per cent level of significance was accepted for this study. That is, a difference in two samples was not

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<sup>1</sup>Claire Sellitz and others, Research Methods in Social Relations (rev. ed.; New York: Henry Holt, 1959), p. 241.

TABLE II  
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

| Jurisdiction: | Sent | Returned | Per cent |
|---------------|------|----------|----------|
| Central       | 57   | 25       | 43.86    |
| North Central | 221  | 164      | 74.21    |
| Northeastern  | 188  | 141      | 75.00    |
| South Central | 126  | 85       | 67.46    |
| Southeastern  | 166  | 107      | 64.46    |
| Western       | 111  | 89       | 80.18    |
| Total         | 869  | 611      | 70.31    |

considered significant unless the test used indicated the difference could not have occurred by chance more than 5 times in 100.

Limitations of the study. The writer recognizes that the survey samples only a very select group of individuals. Leaders in the field of social concerns do not necessarily reflect the knowledge, attitudes, or opinions of the vast number of churchmen not in positions of social concerns leadership. For purposes of this study this very special group was the significant group. It should be remembered, however, that the responses are not necessarily representative of Methodists in general.

While response was generally good, comparisons including the Central Jurisdiction are necessarily less accurate than others because of the limited sample from that Jurisdiction. With only 25 respondents, it is difficult to draw sound conclusions on the basis of comparisons with other jurisdictions. In most cases as the data is analyzed in the following chapter, the Central Jurisdiction will be treated separately.

A mailed questionnaire was used as the research instrument in this study. This research procedure is widely defended, although some observers question the reliability of such an instrument. Some researchers feel that respondents who return a mailed questionnaire

represent a biased sample of the universe under study.<sup>2</sup>

In this case, however, with over 70 per cent response, the data can be considered significantly more representative than would be the case if a smaller response had been received.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Knowledge of the population problem. The questions which were designed to give some indication of the respondents' knowledge of the population problem were 2, 4, 7, 10, and 19. Question 19 is also a supplementary index of readiness. A closer look at the responses to these questions should give us some idea of how Methodist social concerns leaders view the population problem.

For each of the first four "knowledge" questions respondents were asked to choose between categories of Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. It should be noted that for purposes of analysis and comparison, the Strongly Agree and Agree responses have been combined to make an Agree column, and the Disagree and Strongly Disagree responses have been added to make a single Disagree column.

The statement for question 2 was: "The pressure of over-population is one of the chief causes of international tension and modern war." Table III shows the way in which respondents answered question 2.

The response of the Central Jurisdiction may not be a true indication of the knowledge about the population problem of the social concerns leaders in that Jurisdiction. Only 21 of the 25 respondents replied to question 2,

TABLE III

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2

The pressure of over-population is one of the chief causes of international tension and modern war.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage |       |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 12     | 57.14       | 0          | 0.00        | 9        | 42.86       | 21    |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 118    | 73.75       | 9          | 5.63        | 33       | 20.62       | 160   |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 104    | 73.76       | 5          | 3.55        | 32       | 22.69       | 141   |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 66     | 77.65       | 3          | 3.53        | 16       | 18.82       | 85    |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 66     | 64.08       | 8          | 7.77        | 29       | 28.15       | 103   |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 64     | 75.29       | 3          | 3.53        | 18       | 21.18       | 85    |
| Laymen                     | 169    | 74.78       | 8          | 3.54        | 49       | 21.68       | 226   |
| Ministers                  | 261    | 70.73       | 20         | 5.42        | 88       | 23.85       | 369   |
| Male Laymen                | 89     | 70.63       | 4          | 3.17        | 33       | 26.20       | 126   |
| Female Laymen              | 80     | 80.00       | 4          | 4.00        | 16       | 16.00       | 100   |



TABLE III (Continued)

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 2

The pressure of over-population is one of the chief causes of international tension and modern war.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 85     | 70.83       | 8          | 6.67        | 27       | 22.50       | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 251    | 70.31       | 16         | 4.48        | 90       | 25.21       | 357    |
| Over 55 years         | 94     | 79.66       | 4          | 3.39        | 20       | 16.95       | 118    |
| Total                 | 430    | 72.27       | 28         | 4.71        | 137      | 23.02       | 595    |

and the 42.86 per cent disagree response represents only 9 individuals. It is impossible to generalize very extensively with such a small response, but it should be noted that both the disagree response and the 57.14 agree response of the Central Jurisdiction are somewhat different from the responses of the leaders from the other jurisdictions. Among the rest of the jurisdictions, the agree responses range from a low of 64.08 per cent in the South-eastern Jurisdiction to a high of 77.65 per cent in the South Central Jurisdiction.

Laymen seem to agree with the statement slightly more than do ministers, and among laymen, females agree more often than do males. Eighty per cent of the female laymen indicated agreement as compared with only 70.63 per cent of the male laymen. The total figure for laymen, 74.78 per cent, was strongly boosted by the female response and may account for the fact that the laymen figure is over four points higher than the figure for ministers.

The younger respondents seemed less certain about this statement than did those in the over 55 years of age bracket. Those under 35 agreed with the statement in 70.83 per cent of the cases. They expressed no opinion 6.67 per cent of the time and disagreed 22.50 per cent. The respondents who fell in the 35 to 55 age grouping had a similar response, but the over 55 leaders agreed in the proportion of 79.66, expressed no opinion 3.39 per cent,

and disagreed only 16.95 per cent of the time. As we will see later, this is an unusual response as far as the age variable is concerned. Generally the younger respondents indicate more knowledge than those over 55 years of age.

In general, we may conclude that Methodist social concerns leaders agree that the pressure of over-population is one of the chief causes of international tension and modern war. In the totals column, 72.27 per cent of the 595 respondents to this question indicated their agreement with the statement. Only 23.02 per cent expressed disagreement. This, it seems to me, is overwhelming concurrence.

The statement for question 4 was: "If population growth continues at its present rate of increase, the population of the world will be more than double what it is now by the year 2000." Table IV indicates the nature of the responses to this statement.

Many of the returned questionnaires contain a notation on this question to the effect that this statement is not a matter of opinion, but a matter of fact. The writer recognizes the validity of this objection but rejects the notion that it makes the question invalid. On the contrary, this question may be more successful in getting at the knowledge of the respondents about the population problem than any of the other questions. If they are at all familiar with population statistics and

TABLE IV

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4

If population growth continues at its present rate of increase, the population of the world will be more than double what it is now by the year 2000.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 15     | 68.18       | 2          | 9.09        | 5        | 22.73       | 22     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 112    | 69.57       | 43         | 26.71       | 6        | 3.72        | 161    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 99     | 74.44       | 33         | 24.81       | 1        | 0.75        | 133    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 53     | 65.43       | 24         | 29.63       | 4        | 4.94        | 81     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 61     | 60.40       | 34         | 33.66       | 6        | 5.94        | 101    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 53     | 61.63       | 29         | 33.72       | 4        | 4.65        | 86     |
| Laymen                     | 150    | 67.87       | 63         | 28.51       | 8        | 3.62        | 221    |
| Ministers                  | 243    | 66.94       | 102        | 28.10       | 18       | 4.96        | 363    |
| Male Laymen                | 76     | 61.29       | 41         | 33.06       | 7        | 5.65        | 124    |
| Female Laymen              | 74     | 76.29       | 22         | 22.68       | 1        | 1.03        | 97     |

TABLE IV (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4

If population growth continues at its present rate of increase, the population of the world will be more than double what it is now by the year 2000.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 79     | 66.95       | 35         | 29.66       | 4        | 3.39        | 118    |
| 35 to 55              | 237    | 67.71       | 101        | 28.86       | 12       | 3.43        | 350    |
| Over 55 years         | 77     | 66.38       | 29         | 25.00       | 10       | 8.62        | 116    |
| Total                 | 393    | 67.30       | 165        | 28.25       | 26       | 4.45        | 584    |

population projections, they will recognize the truth of the statement. On the other hand, if they do not have this type of factual knowledge, they will disagree with the statement or indicate no opinion in most cases. Some, of course, might have agreed with the statement even though they were not sure.

Over two-thirds of the 584 respondents to this question, 67.30 per cent, indicated agreement with the statement and thus exhibited real acquaintance with the rate of world population increase. Another 28.25 per cent admitted they were not familiar with population statistics by checking No Opinion, and only 4.45 per cent were in disagreement. This is a strong indication of familiarity on the part of these leaders in the field of social concerns with the seriousness of the population explosion.

Among the jurisdictions, the range of agreement is from 60.40 per cent in the Southeastern Jurisdiction to 74.44 per cent in the Northeastern Jurisdiction. The No Opinion answers ranged from 24.81 per cent in the Northeastern to 33.72 in the Western Jurisdiction and 33.66 in the Southeastern. The Central Jurisdiction registered only 9.09 per cent No Opinion and 22.73 per cent disagreement. Again, however, it must be remembered that these proportions are figured on the basis of only 22 responses to this question and thus cannot be seriously compared with the results from other jurisdictions.

Neither position in the church nor age were important factors in answering this question. Laymen and ministers checked responses in substantially the same proportions, as did all three age groups. The only difference worthy of note comes again at the point of sex. Once again the female laymen indicated substantially more knowledge of the population situation by a 76.29 per cent Agree response compared with only 61.29 per cent for the men. The women had no opinion in 22.68 per cent of the cases and checked Disagree only 1.03 per cent of the time, whereas the men checked No Opinion in the proportion 33.06, and Disagree 5.65.

Table V gives the percentage of responses to question 7. The statement for question 7 was: "Because of the rapidly increasing rate of population growth, the world faces the very real danger of a widening gap between food supply and the demand for food."

Once again over 75 per cent of the respondents who answered this question indicated their agreement with the statement. Slightly less than 7 per cent indicated they had no opinion and only 16.50 per cent were in disagreement. This writer feels that we have here another clear indication of the extent of the knowledge of the significance of the population explosion on the part of Methodist social concerns leaders.

On this question agreement is fairly widespread.

TABLE V  
RESPONSE TO QUESTION 7

Because of the rapidly increasing rate of population growth, the world faces the very real danger of a widening gap between food supply and the demand for food.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 14     | 58.33       | 0          | 0.00        | 10       | 41.67       | 24     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 124    | 76.07       | 11         | 6.75        | 28       | 17.18       | 163    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 106    | 75.18       | 11         | 7.80        | 24       | 17.02       | 141    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 66     | 77.65       | 6          | 7.06        | 13       | 15.29       | 85     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 78     | 74.29       | 9          | 8.57        | 18       | 17.14       | 105    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 76     | 86.36       | 5          | 5.68        | 7        | 7.96        | 88     |
| Laymen                     | 177    | 75.32       | 16         | 6.81        | 42       | 17.87       | 235    |
| Ministers                  | 287    | 77.36       | 26         | 7.01        | 58       | 15.63       | 371    |
| Male Laymen                | 92     | 69.70       | 10         | 7.57        | 30       | 22.73       | 132    |
| Female Laymen              | 85     | 82.52       | 6          | 5.83        | 12       | 11.65       | 103    |



TABLE V (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 7

Because of the rapidly increasing rate of population growth, the world faces the very real danger of a widening gap between food supply and the demand for food.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 96     | 80.67       | 7          | 5.88        | 16       | 13.45       | 119    |
| 35 to 55              | 281    | 76.78       | 23         | 6.28        | 62       | 16.94       | 366    |
| Over 55 years         | 87     | 71.90       | 12         | 9.92        | 22       | 18.18       | 121    |
| Total                 | 464    | 76.57       | 42         | 6.93        | 100      | 16.50       | 606    |

Among the jurisdictions only the Central is below 74 per cent of agreement at 58.33. The other jurisdictions range from 74.29 in the Southeastern Jurisdiction to 86.36 in the Western.

Laymen and ministers are also in substantial agreement that food supply may not be able to keep up with population, if population growth continues unchecked. Laymen agree at the rate of 75.32 per cent and ministers 77.36 per cent. Once again we see a difference in response between male laymen and female laymen. As Table V clearly shows, male laymen indicated agreement only 69.70 per cent of the time as compared to 82.52 per cent for the females. On the other hand, women disagreed only 11.65 per cent of the time and the men almost double that at 22.73 per cent.

The responses as they break down by age groups are also of interest on this question. Here we see progressively less agreement as the age of the respondents increases. In the Agree category those respondents under 35 years of age answered at the rate of 80.67 per cent; 35 to 55, 76.78 per cent; and those over 55, 71.90 per cent. On the other hand, the rate of disagreement grows as age increases. The same is true of the No Opinion responses.

The statement for question 10 was: "The rate of world population growth is not so great as to warrant

widespread public concern." Table VI outlines the responses to this statement.

Methodist social concerns leaders indicated overwhelming disagreement with this statement. The total disagreement was 91.21 per cent with only 5.97 indicating agreement. In all, 603 of the 611 respondents answered this question which is also an indication of definite feeling about the importance of the population explosion in the minds of the respondents.

Only the Central Jurisdiction scored low in the disagree column and relatively high on the agree side. Even so, this represented only 15 of 25 who disagreed and 8 of 25 who agreed, not a large enough representation of the leaders in the field of social concerns of the Central Jurisdiction to make extensive generalizations. Among the other jurisdictions disagreement was more universal. Once again we find the Southeastern Jurisdiction on the bottom of the scale with 88.57 per cent in disagreement, as compared with a high of 97.55 per cent in the North Central Jurisdiction. While the range is not great, it is to be noted that in all four of these "knowledge" questions the Southeastern Jurisdiction has scored lowest (with the exception of the Central Jurisdiction).

Laymen and ministers are basically agreed on disagreement to the notion that the public should not be concerned about the population explosion. Laymen answered

TABLE VI

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 10

The rate of world population growth is not so great as to warrant widespread public concern.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 8      | 32.00       | 2          | 8.00        | 15       | 60.00       | 25     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 3      | 1.84        | 1          | 0.61        | 159      | 97.55       | 163    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 8      | 5.71        | 7          | 5.00        | 125      | 89.29       | 140    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 5      | 5.95        | 1          | 1.19        | 78       | 92.86       | 84     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 7      | 6.67        | 5          | 4.76        | 93       | 88.57       | 105    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 5      | 5.81        | 1          | 1.16        | 80       | 93.02       | 86     |
| Laymen                     | 16     | 6.87        | 12         | 5.15        | 205      | 87.98       | 233    |
| Ministers                  | 20     | 5.41        | 5          | 1.35        | 345      | 93.24       | 370    |
| Male Laymen                | 12     | 9.23        | 7          | 5.39        | 111      | 85.38       | 130    |
| Female Laymen              | 4      | 3.88        | 5          | 4.86        | 94       | 91.26       | 103    |

TABLE VI (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 10

The rate of world population growth is not so great as to warrant widespread public concern.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 7      | 5.83        | 1          | 0.84        | 112      | 93.33       | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 22     | 6.08        | 10         | 2.76        | 330      | 91.16       | 362    |
| Over 55 years         | 7      | 5.78        | 6          | 4.96        | 108      | 89.26       | 121    |
| Total                 | 36     | 5.97        | 17         | 2.82        | 550      | 91.21       | 603    |

Disagree in 87.98 per cent of the cases as compared with 93.24 for the ministerial members of annual conference Boards of Christian Social Concerns.

As in the three previous questions, the total percentage for laymen is bolstered by the apparent knowledge of the female laymen, although in this question the difference in response is not quite as great. In this case, the men disagreed 85.38 per cent of the time compared with 91.26 for the women.

The same pattern with regard to age grouping that existed in the responses to the last question is in evidence here as well. The difference is not great, but it is interesting to note that as respondents are older, their rate of disagreement decreases slightly. The under 35 respondents indicated disagreement in the proportion of 93.33; the 35 to 55 group, 91.16; and over 55, 89.26.

Question 19 gave respondents an opportunity to rank social problems as to the importance of their solution. It read:

Rank the following social problems as to the urgency of their solution. Write "1" before the problem you consider most urgent, and so on through "6" before the problem you consider least urgent.

- A. Race relations within the United States
- B. International tensions
- C. Use of alcohol and tobacco
- D. World population growth
- E. Juvenile delinquency
- F. Poverty in the world

Table VII shows the total scores by grouping for each of

TABLE VII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 19

Rank the following social problems as to the urgency of their solution. Write "1" before the problem you consider most urgent, and so on through "6" before the problem you consider least urgent.

| Groups of Respondents      | A           |      | B           |      | C           |      | D           |      | E           |      | F           |      |
|----------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
|                            | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 32          | 1    | 71          | 3    | 93          | 5    | 93          | 5    | 74          | 4    | 56          | 2    |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 333         | 1    | 404         | 2    | 797         | 6    | 574         | 4    | 722         | 5    | 510         | 3    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 316         | 1    | 388         | 2    | 720         | 6    | 489         | 4    | 596         | 5    | 405         | 3    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 194         | 1    | 281         | 3    | 358         | 6    | 317         | 4    | 348         | 5    | 266         | 2    |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 279         | 1    | 290         | 2    | 445         | 6    | 402         | 4    | 410         | 5    | 330         | 3    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 211         | 1    | 217         | 2    | 453         | 6    | 311         | 4    | 380         | 5    | 247         | 3    |
| Laymen                     | 569         | 1    | 683         | 2    | 1094        | 6    | 844         | 4    | 948         | 5    | 724         | 3    |
| Ministers                  | 796         | 1    | 968         | 2    | 1772        | 6    | 1342        | 4    | 1582        | 5    | 1090        | 3    |
| Male Laymen                | 346         | 1    | 357         | 2    | 631         | 6    | 471         | 4    | 525         | 5    | 390         | 3    |
| Female Laymen              | 223         | 1    | 326         | 2    | 463         | 6    | 373         | 4    | 423         | 5    | 334         | 3    |

TABLE VII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 19

Rank the following social problems as to the urgency of their solution. Write "1" before the problem you consider most urgent, and so on through "6" before the problem you consider least urgent.

| Groups of Respondents | A           |      | B           |      | C           |      | D           |      | E           |      | F           |      |
|-----------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
|                       | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank | Total Score | Rank |
| Under 35 years        | 258         | 1    | 303         | 2    | 631         | 6    | 410         | 4    | 539         | 5    | 353         | 3    |
| 35 to 55              | 829         | 1    | 1006        | 2    | 1736        | 6    | 1310        | 4    | 1530        | 5    | 1073        | 3    |
| Over 55 years         | 278         | 1    | 342         | 2    | 499         | 6    | 466         | 5    | 461         | 4    | 388         | 3    |
| Total                 | 1365        | 1    | 1651        | 2    | 2866        | 6    | 2186        | 4    | 2530        | 5    | 1814        | 3    |

A-Race relations

B-International tensions

C-Use of alcohol and tobacco

D-World population

E-Juvenile delinquency

F-World poverty



the problems and also indicates the ranking of the problems by group. It should be noted that the lower the number, the more urgent was the problem considered, and vice versa.

The writer would rank world population third behind race relations and international tensions. However, the respondents consistently ranked population fourth with world poverty third. Since over-population is such a great contributing factor to poverty in the world, it seems that population should be ranked as a more pressing problem than poverty.

Several interesting aspects of Table VII should be noted. For instance, the ranking is almost exactly the same in every grouping. Without exception, race relations is listed as the number one problem needing a solution. International tensions is ranked second in every case with the exception of two jurisdictions, the Central and the South Central, where it is ranked third and world poverty second. Poverty is consistently ranked third with the above two exceptions. World population growth is ranked fourth in every case except the Over 55 age group, where it is fifth behind juvenile delinquency by only four points, and the Central Jurisdiction. Juvenile delinquency is ranked fifth with the above two exceptions, and the use of alcohol and tobacco is ranked last in every case without exception. The totals reflect this ranking

throughout.

The fact that world population growth is ranked as more important than either juvenile delinquency or the use of alcohol and tobacco seems important to this writer. The Methodist Church, and the Protestant church in general, has done little or nothing with regard to making clear the implications of the population explosion. Yet the time, effort, and money expended on the problems of juvenile delinquency and especially the use of alcohol and tobacco have been enormous. In view of the fact that Methodist leaders in the field of Christian social concerns consider population growth more important than either of these other two problems, it would seem that the church must begin to emphasize population and planned parenthood much more than it has in the past.

As we look over these five questions it seems clear that in general the respondents are quite knowledgeable as to the extent and importance of the population problem. They overwhelmingly regard it as one of the chief causes of international tension and modern war. For the most part they are aware that if the rate of population increase continues unchecked, world population will more than double itself by the year 2000. They recognize the significance of the race between people and food to feed those people. They are convinced almost unanimously that the rate of world population is so great that it should

warrant widespread public concern, and they rank world population growth as more important than juvenile delinquency or the use of alcohol and tobacco. Geographically, the Southeastern Jurisdiction is the least knowledgeable of the jurisdictions with the exception of the Central Jurisdiction. Laymen and ministers responded essentially the same to these five questions, as did the three age groupings. In every case, however, female laymen seem to have more knowledge of the population problem and its significance than do male laymen.

Attitudes toward conception control and family planning. The questions under consideration in this section are numbers 3, 6, 11, 20, 21, and 22. The first three, 3, 6, and 11, were tabulated in Agree, No Opinion, Disagree categories, as were the first four questions in the previously discussed "knowledge" section.

The statement for question 3 was:

If the United States is to provide any foreign aid to a nation, that aid should include technical and financial assistance in the field of planned parenthood to those nations requesting it.

In his report on his research, Family Planning Attitudes of Methodist Seminary Husbands and Wives, James E. Allen of Boston University reports that 97 per cent of the respondents to his questionnaire reported favoring the giving of birth control aid by the United States to

countries requesting it.<sup>1</sup> In the present research, as Table VIII indicates, the response favoring such a plan was 94.37 per cent with only 3.15 per cent in disagreement. This agree figure represents 570 of 604 Methodist social concerns leaders in every jurisdiction across the United States.

Once again the Central Jurisdiction is lowest in agreement at 78.26 per cent. It should be observed, however, that this represents 18 of 23 responses, and is higher than the response of the Central Jurisdiction on any of the "knowledge" questions. Among the rest of the jurisdictions agreement is very universal, ranging from 93.10 per cent in the Western Jurisdiction to 97.86 per cent in the Northeastern Jurisdiction.

Ministers seem slightly more agreeable to this proposition than laymen, scoring 95.39 per cent to 92.77 per cent for the laymen. The difference cannot be considered important. As in the questions previously considered, female laymen outscore male laymen on this question, but the margin of difference is much less than in previous questions. Age does not seem to be an important factor, although the younger groupings are both above 94 per cent in agreement while the Over 55 age group scored

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<sup>1</sup>James E. Allen, Family Planning Attitudes of Methodist Seminary Husbands and Wives (summary of unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, Boston, Massachusetts, 1963), p. 4.

TABLE VIII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3

If the United States is to provide any foreign aid to a nation, that aid should include technical and financial assistance in the field of planned parenthood to those nations requesting it.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 18     | 78.26       | 1          | 4.35        | 4        | 17.39       | 23     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 154    | 93.90       | 5          | 3.05        | 5        | 3.05        | 164    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 137    | 97.86       | 0          | 0.00        | 3        | 2.14        | 140    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 82     | 96.47       | 1          | 1.18        | 2        | 2.35        | 85     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 98     | 93.33       | 5          | 4.76        | 2        | 1.91        | 105    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 81     | 93.10       | 3          | 3.45        | 3        | 3.45        | 87     |
| Laymen                     | 218    | 92.77       | 6          | 2.55        | 11       | 4.68        | 235    |
| Ministers                  | 352    | 95.39       | 9          | 2.44        | 8        | 2.17        | 369    |
| Male Laymen                | 122    | 92.42       | 2          | 1.52        | 8        | 6.06        | 132    |
| Female Laymen              | 96     | 93.20       | 4          | 3.89        | 3        | 2.91        | 103    |

TABLE VIII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3

If the United States is to provide any foreign aid to a nation, that aid should include technical and financial assistance in the field of planned parenthood to those nations requesting it.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 113    | 94.17       | 4          | 3.33        | 3        | 2.50        | 120    |
| 35 to 55 years        | 348    | 95.87       | 6          | 1.65        | 9        | 2.48        | 363    |
| Over 55 years         | 109    | 90.08       | 5          | 4.13        | 7        | 5.79        | 121    |
| Total                 | 570    | 94.37       | 15         | 2.48        | 19       | 3.15        | 604    |

only 90.08 per cent Agree and almost 6 per cent Disagree.

An overall look at the responses to this statement indicates overwhelming approval by Methodist social concerns leaders for family planning information to be included in foreign aid assistance to nations requesting such assistance.

The statement for question 6 was: "The use of contraception in planning families is immoral and should never be undertaken by Christian couples." Table IX shows the nature of the responses to this statement.

No other question brought such universal response as did this one. In no separate grouping, as Table IX clearly shows, did the percentage of disagreement drop below 91 per cent. The total for 607 respondents was 97.20 in disagreement, 1.32 per cent had no opinion, and only 1.48 per cent agreed that family planning through the use of contraception is immoral.

Among jurisdictions, the Central scored the low 91.30 per cent disagreement, but this figure represents 21 of 23 respondents in that jurisdiction. Among the remaining five jurisdictions, the Southeastern was lowest with 96.26 per cent disagreement, and the North Central Jurisdiction high with 98.17 per cent. The North Central score represents 161 out of 164 respondents who disagreed that contraception in family planning is immoral.

Ministers outscored laymen only slightly on this

TABLE IX

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 6

The use of contraception in planning families is immoral and should never be undertaken by Christian couples.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 2      | 8.70        | 0          | 0.00        | 21       | 91.30       | 23     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 1      | 0.61        | 2          | 1.22        | 161      | 98.17       | 164    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 1      | 0.72        | 3          | 2.14        | 136      | 97.14       | 140    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 2      | 2.35        | 0          | 0.00        | 83       | 97.65       | 85     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 2      | 1.87        | 2          | 1.87        | 103      | 96.26       | 107    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 1      | 1.14        | 1          | 1.14        | 86       | 97.72       | 88     |
| Laymen                     | 5      | 2.09        | 4          | 1.68        | 230      | 96.23       | 239    |
| Ministers                  | 4      | 1.09        | 4          | 1.09        | 360      | 97.82       | 368    |
| Male Laymen                | 2      | 1.51        | 1          | 0.76        | 129      | 97.73       | 132    |
| Female Laymen              | 3      | 2.80        | 3          | 2.80        | 101      | 94.40       | 107    |



TABLE IX (Continued)

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 6

The use of contraception in planning families is immoral and should never be undertaken by Christian couples.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 1      | 0.83        | 2          | 1.67        | 117      | 97.50       | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 5      | 1.37        | 1          | 0.27        | 360      | 98.36       | 366    |
| Over 55 years         | 3      | 2.48        | 5          | 4.13        | 113      | 93.39       | 121    |
| Total                 | 9      | 1.48        | 8          | 1.32        | 590      | 97.20       | 607    |

question, 97.82 per cent to 96.23 per cent. In the male-female grouping, the trend which has held on every question thus far was reversed here. On this question the male laymen responded in disagreement in 129 of 132 cases for 97.73 per cent, and the women 101 of 107 for 94.40 per cent. The difference is not great, but it is interesting to see the reversal in form as far as the per cent of responses is concerned.

The age groupings reveal the Over 55 group behind the younger groups again, at 93.39 per cent disagreement as compared with 97.50 per cent for the Under 35 respondents and 98.36 for the 35 to 55 grouping. It is interesting to note, however, that while the Over 55 grouping is lowest in per cent of disagree response, most of the 121 respondents in this group who did not disagree expressed no opinion rather than agree that contraception in family planning is immoral. Generally, we can conclude that the response to this question indicates almost unanimous feeling among Methodist social concerns leaders that contraception is moral for use by Christian couples in family planning.

Question 11 represents one of the most interesting questions in the survey. The statement for this question was: "Planned parenthood, practiced in Christian conscience, fulfills rather than violates the will of God." This statement of course represents the official position

of the Methodist Church on the question of planned parenthood as it is a direct quotation from the report of the General Board of Christian Social Concerns of the Methodist Church adopted by its 1960 General Conference.<sup>2</sup> The statement was in no way identified as the official position of the Methodist Church, even to the extent of refraining from putting the statement in quotation marks. The response should represent an accurate account of the degree of agreement on the part of Methodist annual conference social concerns leaders with the official position taken by their church. Table X illustrates the responses to this statement.

Of the 605 respondents who checked an answer for this question, 586 or 96.86 per cent agreed with the position of the Methodist Church, 2.15 per cent had no opinion, and only 6 respondents or 0.99 per cent disagreed. This is an extremely meaningful response in the opinion of this writer and represents a tremendous concurrence on the part of these leaders with the stated position of their church.

Only the Central Jurisdiction scored below 90 per cent agreement with the statement. But the 87.50 per cent agreement represented 21 of the 24 respondents from the

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<sup>2</sup>Methodists Speak on Christian Social Concerns  
(Washington, D. C.: General Board of Christian Social Concerns of the Methodist Church).

TABLE X

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 11

Planned parenthood, practiced in Christian conscience, fulfills rather than violates the will of God.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 21     | 87.50       | 1          | 4.17        | 2        | 8.33        | 24     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 159    | 97.54       | 2          | 1.23        | 2        | 1.23        | 163    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 136    | 97.14       | 4          | 2.86        | 0        | 0.00        | 140    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 81     | 96.43       | 2          | 2.38        | 1        | 1.19        | 84     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 106    | 100.00      | 0          | 0.00        | 0        | 0.00        | 106    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 83     | 94.32       | 4          | 4.54        | 1        | 1.14        | 88     |
| Laymen                     | 224    | 94.91       | 10         | 4.24        | 2        | 0.85        | 236    |
| Ministers                  | 362    | 98.10       | 3          | 0.81        | 4        | 1.09        | 369    |
| Male Laymen                | 119    | 92.25       | 9          | 6.98        | 1        | 0.77        | 129    |
| Female Laymen              | 105    | 98.14       | 1          | 0.93        | 1        | 0.93        | 107    |

TABLE X (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 11

Planned parenthood, practiced in Christian conscience, fulfills rather than violates the will of God.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 118    | 98.34       | 1          | 0.83        | 1        | 0.83        | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 355    | 97.26       | 8          | 2.19        | 2        | 0.55        | 365    |
| Over 55 years         | 113    | 94.17       | 4          | 3.33        | 3        | 2.50        | 120    |
| Total                 | 586    | 96.86       | 13         | 2.15        | 6        | 0.99        | 605    |

Central Jurisdiction. Of the total of 6 respondents who indicated disagreement, 2 of those responses were in the Central Jurisdiction alone. Of the other jurisdictions, the low score was in the Western Jurisdiction which had a 94.32 per cent Agree response, and the high was an almost unbelievable 100 per cent in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Ministers agreed in somewhat greater numbers with this statement than did laymen. Ministers scored 98.10 per cent agreement compared with 94.91 per cent for the laymen. As in several of the previous questions, the positive response of the laymen was held down by the male laymen. In the breakdown of responses by sex the male laymen agreed with the official position of the Methodist Church in only 92.25 per cent of the cases, as compared to 98.14 per cent among the women.

Here too we see the decrease in percentage of agreement as age increases. The Under 35 respondents agreed 98.34 per cent of the time; the 35 to 55 group, 97.26 per cent; and the Over 55 group, 94.17 per cent. With the per cent of agreement so high in every case it is unfair to imply that there is any significant difference in the answers of the various groups within the Methodist social concerns leaders. Even the lowest per cent of agreement is very substantial support of the stated position of the Methodist Church on the question of planned parenthood.

As we have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the question of the purpose of the marital sex act is crucial to an understanding of the theological basis for the use of contraceptives in family planning. Question 20 gave respondents an opportunity to indicate their understanding of the purpose of marital sex. The question read:

Which of the following statements most closely represents your understanding of the purpose of the marital sex act? Check one only.

A. The only purpose of the marital sex act is the procreation of children.

B. The primary purpose of the marital sex act is the procreation of children.

C. The primary purpose of the marital sex act is the mutual expression of human love.

D. Procreation and the mutual expression of love share equally as the purposes of the marital sex act.

The four choices represent the pre-Reformation belief of the church, the current Roman Catholic position, the position taken by this writer in an earlier chapter, and the usual position of the modern Protestant church, in that order. Table XI shows the number and per cent of response for each choice.

The major thesis of this paper is appreciably supported in the response to this question. Ninety-nine per cent of the 601 respondents checked either C or D of the four choices, thus indicating support of either the position taken in this paper or the usual Protestant position. Only one, a minister over 55 years of age in the Central Jurisdiction, indicated that the only purpose

TABLE XI

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 20

Which of the following statements most closely represents your understanding of the purpose of the marital sex act? Check one only.

| Groups of Respondents      | A      |             | B      |             | C      |             | D      |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 1      | 4.17        | 2      | 8.33        | 3      | 12.50       | 18     | 75.00       | 24     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 0      | 0.00        | 1      | 0.62        | 58     | 35.80       | 103    | 63.58       | 162    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 0      | 0.00        | 0      | 0.00        | 32     | 22.70       | 109    | 77.30       | 141    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 0      | 0.00        | 1      | 1.20        | 18     | 21.69       | 64     | 77.11       | 83     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 0      | 0.00        | 0      | 0.00        | 20     | 19.42       | 83     | 80.58       | 103    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 0      | 0.00        | 1      | 1.14        | 35     | 39.77       | 52     | 59.09       | 88     |
| Laymen                     | 0      | 0.00        | 2      | 0.85        | 57     | 24.36       | 175    | 74.79       | 234    |
| Ministers                  | 1      | 0.27        | 3      | 0.82        | 109    | 29.70       | 254    | 69.21       | 367    |
| Male Laymen                | 0      | 0.00        | 1      | 0.77        | 34     | 26.15       | 95     | 73.08       | 130    |
| Female Laymen              | 0      | 0.00        | 1      | 0.96        | 23     | 22.12       | 80     | 76.92       | 104    |



TABLE XI (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 20

Which of the following statements most closely represents your understanding of the purpose of the marital sex act? Check one only.

| Groups of Respondents | A      |             | B      |             | C      |             | D      |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 0      | 0.00        | 0      | 0.00        | 34     | 28.57       | 85     | 71.43       | 119    |
| 35 to 55              | 0      | 0.00        | 4      | 1.11        | 108    | 29.83       | 250    | 69.06       | 362    |
| Over 55 years         | 1      | 0.83        | 1      | 0.83        | 24     | 20.00       | 94     | 78.34       | 120    |
| Total                 | 1      | 0.17        | 5      | 0.83        | 166    | 27.62       | 429    | 71.38       | 601    |

A-The only purpose of the marital sex act is the procreation of children.

B-The primary purpose of the marital sex act is the procreation of children.

C-The primary purpose of the marital sex act is the mutual expression of human love.

D-Procreation and the mutual expression of love share equally as the purposes of the marital sex act.

of marital sex is the procreation of children. Only five or 0.83 per cent checked choice B, the official position of the Roman Catholic Church, and two of these were in the Central Jurisdiction. The totals indicate that 71.38 per cent of the respondents agreed with the usual position of the Protestant Church, while 27.62 per cent supported the opinion of this writer in checking choice C.

Among the jurisdictions the greatest support for choice C, the position of this writer, came from the Western Jurisdiction where 39.77 per cent indicated the primacy of the mutual expression of love in the marital sex act. The North Central Jurisdiction was close behind with 35.80 per cent. The Southeastern Jurisdiction was low with 19.42 per cent but was high in the D column with 80.58 per cent.

There appears to be no substantial difference between ministers and laymen or between male laymen and female laymen. In the age grouping, however, it is interesting to note that the Over 55 group gave the lowest per cent of response to choice C with 20.00 per cent, but were highest in choice D with 78.34 per cent. As we pointed out earlier, the only response for choice A appeared in this age group as well. In general, we may conclude that Methodist social concerns leaders are very much in agreement with the usual Protestant position of the purpose of marital sex, and in many cases agree with what this writer

hopes will become the new Protestant position.

Question 21 was designed to determine some of the bases on which a respondent would personally use some contraceptive method. The question was:

For which of the following reasons would you use contraception to prevent a pregnancy in marriage? Check as many as you accept.

- A. If a pregnancy would seriously endanger the health of the mother.
- B. If another child would make it difficult to provide the necessities of food, clothing, housing, and education for the family.
- C. If another child would require reduction in the standard of living which you associate with the middle or upper class way of life.
- D. If career or vocational training or demands require planned parenthood.
- E. If you desire to space the arrival of children.
- F. Because of the rapidly increasing world population.
- G. Other (please specify).

Table XII shows the number and percentages of responses to each choice.

The totals column indicates the almost unanimous concern of the respondents for the health of the mother. Altogether 97.05 per cent of the 611 social concerns leaders surveyed checked choice A indicating they would personally use contraception to prevent a pregnancy if the health of the mother would be endangered by the pregnancy. Every category of response ranks the health of the mother as the number one reason for using contraception, including a 100 per cent response from respondents in the Central Jurisdiction.

TABLE XII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 21

For which of the following reasons would you use contraception to prevent a pregnancy in marriage? Check as many as you accept.

| Groups of Respondents | A      |             | B      |             | C      |             | D      |             | E      |             | F      |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number |
| Central               | 25     | 100         | 16     | 64.00       | 0      | 0.00        | 6      | 24.00       | 14     | 56.00       | 5      | 20.00       | 25     |
| North Central         | 159    | 96.95       | 151    | 92.07       | 31     | 18.90       | 105    | 64.02       | 149    | 90.85       | 91     | 55.49       | 164    |
| Northeastern          | 136    | 96.45       | 130    | 92.20       | 22     | 15.60       | 87     | 61.70       | 122    | 86.52       | 66     | 46.81       | 141    |
| South Central         | 83     | 97.65       | 80     | 94.12       | 18     | 21.18       | 49     | 57.65       | 77     | 90.59       | 36     | 42.35       | 85     |
| Southeastern          | 104    | 97.20       | 94     | 87.85       | 17     | 15.89       | 48     | 44.86       | 93     | 86.92       | 37     | 34.58       | 107    |
| Western               | 86     | 96.63       | 81     | 91.01       | 20     | 22.47       | 46     | 51.69       | 80     | 89.89       | 45     | 50.56       | 89     |
| Laymen                | 230    | 95.83       | 209    | 87.08       | 51     | 21.25       | 127    | 52.92       | 200    | 83.33       | 101    | 42.08       | 240    |
| Ministers             | 363    | 97.84       | 343    | 92.45       | 57     | 15.36       | 214    | 57.68       | 335    | 90.30       | 184    | 49.60       | 371    |
| Male Laymen           | 124    | 93.94       | 112    | 84.85       | 32     | 24.24       | 63     | 47.73       | 105    | 79.55       | 52     | 39.39       | 132    |
| Female Laymen         | 106    | 98.15       | 97     | 89.81       | 19     | 17.59       | 64     | 59.26       | 95     | 87.96       | 49     | 45.37       | 108    |

TABLE XII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 21

For which of the following reasons would you use contraception to prevent a pregnancy in marriage? Check as many as you accept.

| Groups of Respondents | A      |             | B      |             | C      |             | D      |             | E      |             | F      |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 yrs.         | 116    | 95.87       | 115    | 95.04       | 21     | 17.36       | 85     | 70.25       | 113    | 93.39       | 67     | 55.37       | 121    |
| 35 to 55              | 358    | 97.55       | 336    | 91.55       | 55     | 14.99       | 201    | 54.77       | 321    | 87.47       | 175    | 47.68       | 367    |
| Over 55 yrs.          | 119    | 96.75       | 101    | 82.11       | 32     | 26.02       | 55     | 44.72       | 101    | 82.11       | 43     | 34.96       | 123    |
| Total                 | 593    | 97.05       | 552    | 90.34       | 108    | 17.68       | 341    | 55.81       | 535    | 87.56       | 285    | 46.64       | 611    |

A-If a pregnancy would seriously endanger the health of the mother.

B-If another child would make it difficult to provide the necessities of food, clothing, housing, and education for the family.

C-If another child would require reduction in the standard of living which you associate with the middle or upper class way of life.

D-If career or vocational training or demands require planned parenthood.

E-If you desire to space the arrival of children.

F-Because of the problem of the rapidly increasing world population.

The number two reason for using contraception, scoring 90.34 per cent, was choice B, the difficulty of providing the necessities of life for the family if another child is born. The desire to space the arrival of children ranked third with 87.56 per cent. These three major answers compare with those found among seminary students in the Allen study. The three major reasons seminarians gave for family planning were (1) economic and financial, (2) wife's health, and (3) adequate child care.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most important statistic in Table XII is the ranking of choice F, the world's exploding population. Only 285 respondents of 611, or 46.64 per cent, indicated they would use contraception because of the population explosion. This choice scored as low as 34.58 per cent in the Southeastern Jurisdiction and 20.00 per cent in the Central Jurisdiction. Only choice C received fewer checks than world population growth. This circumstance is probably due again to the fact that the population explosion is not identified with the United States. Even though respondents show a great deal of knowledge as to the extent and significance of the population explosion, they rank it fifth in a list of six choices as a reason for their personal use of contraception. This is a clear indication of the fact that we are not yet personally involved in the struggle against over-population.

Also of interest is the low percentage of response to contraception to prevent an addition to the family which might require a reduction in the standard of living associated with the middle or upper class way of life. The fact that only 17.68 per cent of the respondents indicated they would use contraception for this reason is illustrative of an important ethical insight on the part of more than 82 per cent of the respondents.

Question 22 asked respondents to indicate whether they considered specific methods of contraception as moral. The question was:

Which of the following methods of contraception do you consider morally proper for use by a married Christian couple? Check as many as you accept.

- A. Diaphragm.
- B. Foams, jellies, suppositories.
- C. Oral contraceptives.
- D. Rhythm method or "safe period."
- E. Condom.
- F. Withdrawal.
- G. Abstinence.
- H. Other (please specify).

Table XIII indicates the way in which respondents ranked contraceptive methods on a moral basis as well as the number and percentage of responses for each choice. Only withdrawal and abstinence failed to receive at least 78 per cent approval, and they were far behind at 39.93 per cent and 33.22 per cent respectively. With the exception of the Central Jurisdiction, where the rhythm method received the widest approval, every grouping ranks the

TABLE XIII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 22

Which of the following methods of contraception do you consider morally proper for use by a married Christian couple? Check as many as you accept.

| Groups of Respondents | A      |             | B      |             | C      |             | D      |             | E      |             | F      |             | G      |             | Tot.   |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number |
| Central               | 11     | 44.00       | 13     | 52.00       | 11     | 44.00       | 16     | 64.00       | 9      | 36.00       | 6      | 24.00       | 5      | 20.00       | 25     |
| North Central         | 153    | 93.29       | 140    | 85.37       | 134    | 81.71       | 133    | 81.10       | 136    | 82.93       | 67     | 40.85       | 61     | 37.20       | 164    |
| Northeastern          | 124    | 87.94       | 112    | 79.43       | 118    | 83.69       | 113    | 80.14       | 112    | 79.43       | 63     | 44.68       | 52     | 36.88       | 141    |
| South Central         | 82     | 96.47       | 73     | 85.88       | 71     | 83.53       | 73     | 85.88       | 73     | 85.88       | 37     | 45.53       | 26     | 30.59       | 85     |
| Southeastern          | 99     | 92.52       | 78     | 72.90       | 80     | 74.77       | 83     | 77.57       | 82     | 76.64       | 40     | 37.38       | 26     | 24.30       | 107    |
| Western               | 77     | 86.52       | 68     | 76.40       | 71     | 79.78       | 64     | 71.91       | 67     | 75.28       | 31     | 34.83       | 33     | 37.08       | 89     |
| Laymen                | 203    | 84.58       | 184    | 76.67       | 177    | 73.75       | 184    | 76.67       | 166    | 69.17       | 100    | 41.67       | 75     | 31.25       | 240    |
| Ministers             | 343    | 92.45       | 300    | 80.86       | 308    | 83.02       | 298    | 80.32       | 313    | 84.37       | 144    | 38.81       | 128    | 34.50       | 371    |
| Male Laymen           | 114    | 86.36       | 107    | 81.06       | 99     | 75.00       | 107    | 81.06       | 104    | 78.79       | 65     | 49.24       | 46     | 34.85       | 132    |
| Female Laymen         | 89     | 82.41       | 77     | 71.30       | 78     | 72.22       | 77     | 71.30       | 62     | 57.41       | 35     | 32.41       | 29     | 26.85       | 108    |



TABLE XIII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 22

Which of the following methods of contraception do you consider morally proper for use by a married Christian couple? Check as many as you accept.

| Groups of Respondents | A      |             | B      |             | C      |             | D      |             | E      |             | F      |             | G      |             | Tot.   |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 yrs.         | 115    | 95.04       | 103    | 85.12       | 106    | 87.60       | 100    | 82.64       | 108    | 89.26       | 50     | 41.32       | 42     | 34.71       | 121    |
| 35 to 55              | 339    | 92.37       | 301    | 82.02       | 299    | 81.47       | 292    | 79.56       | 294    | 80.11       | 141    | 38.42       | 125    | 34.06       | 367    |
| Over 55 yrs.          | 92     | 74.80       | 80     | 65.04       | 80     | 65.04       | 90     | 73.17       | 77     | 62.60       | 53     | 43.09       | 36     | 29.27       | 123    |
| Total                 | 546    | 89.36       | 484    | 79.21       | 485    | 79.37       | 482    | 78.89       | 479    | 78.40       | 244    | 39.93       | 203    | 33.22       | 611    |

A-Diaphragm

B-Foams, jellies, suppositories

C-Oral contraceptives

D-Rhythm method or "safe period"

E-Condom

F-Withdrawal

G-Abstinence

diaphragm as the most acceptable method of contraception on a moral basis. The condom was ranked fifth at 78.40 per cent approval, but this is in part explained by the lack of knowledge on the part of many respondents as to the meaning of the term condom. Altogether 14 respondents indicated they did not know the meaning of the word, and how many others failed to check it for the same reason cannot be accurately estimated.

The obvious conclusion from the response to this question is that, with the possible exception of withdrawal and abstinence, the question of the use of contraceptives is not a moral one for the vast majority of Methodist leaders in the field of Christian social concerns. In several cases respondents failed to check any of the choices but indicated they could not answer the question because contraception was not a question of morality for them. Several noted that any method which is not injurious to either emotional or physical health and which is acceptable to the couple involved is morally proper. It seems to this writer that this represents a good summary statement on the part of the large majority of those surveyed.

Knowledge of contraceptive methods. There were only two questions in the study which specifically sought information as to the knowledge of the respondents with regard to specific methods of contraception. These were

questions 5 and 8. The writer recognizes that these questions are not of crucial significance as far as the major purposes of this study are concerned. The questions were inserted more out of a personal desire for the information than as an aid to the present research. The results are, however, extremely interesting and they are presented here for the edification of the reader.

Respondents were asked to check Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with regard to a specific statement in both questions. The statement for question 5 was: "Oral contraception is an effective means of preventing conception." Table XIV shows the way in which respondents answered this question.

The most interesting statistic in response to this question is not in the Agree or Disagree column but in the No Opinion column. Of the 584 respondents who answered this question, 208 or 35.62 per cent indicated they had no opinion as to the effectiveness of oral contraceptives. In the various groups the lack of knowledge ranks as high as 45.69 per cent in the Over 55 age group, and 45.19 in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. It seems to this writer that these figures are a clear indication that there is still a considerable amount of educational work to be done with regard to the use and effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

On the Agree side the totals column indicates 54.96

TABLE XIV  
RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5

Oral contraception is an effective means of preventing conception.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 5      | 23.81       | 7          | 33.33       | 9        | 42.86       | 21     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 93     | 57.41       | 52         | 32.10       | 17       | 10.49       | 162    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 83     | 61.48       | 45         | 33.33       | 7        | 5.19        | 135    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 41     | 50.62       | 33         | 40.74       | 7        | 8.64        | 81     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 47     | 45.19       | 47         | 45.19       | 10       | 9.62        | 104    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 52     | 64.20       | 24         | 29.63       | 5        | 6.17        | 81     |
| Laymen                     | 118    | 53.15       | 88         | 39.64       | 16       | 7.21        | 222    |
| Ministers                  | 203    | 56.08       | 120        | 33.15       | 39       | 10.77       | 362    |
| Male Laymen                | 65     | 51.59       | 50         | 39.68       | 11       | 8.73        | 126    |
| Female Laymen              | 53     | 55.21       | 38         | 39.58       | 5        | 5.21        | 96     |

TABLE XIV (Continued)

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 5

Oral contraception is an effective means of preventing conception.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 76     | 63.33       | 42         | 35.00       | 2        | 1.67        | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 195    | 56.03       | 113        | 32.47       | 40       | 11.50       | 348    |
| Over 55 years         | 50     | 43.10       | 53         | 45.69       | 13       | 11.21       | 116    |
| Total                 | 321    | 54.96       | 208        | 35.62       | 55       | 9.42        | 584    |

per cent of all respondents recognize the effectiveness of oral contraceptives. This figure goes as high as 64.20 per cent in the Western Jurisdiction and as low as 43.10 in the Over 55 age group (the Central Jurisdiction figure is 23.81 per cent). Fewer than 10 per cent of all respondents disagreed that oral contraception is an effective means of preventing conception.

The statement for question 8 was: "The rhythm or 'safe period' method of birth control has proven to be an effective means of preventing conception." Table XV outlines the responses to this statement. These two questions represent extremes as far as effective methods of contraception are concerned. Oral contraceptives, as we have previously pointed out, are considered the most effective contraceptives available when used properly. The rhythm method, on the other hand, is notorious for its unreliability. Slightly less than 55 per cent of the respondents were familiar with the effectiveness of oral contraceptives, and 65.83 per cent recognized the ineffectiveness of the rhythm method.

In all, 14.91 per cent agreed that rhythm is effective, 19.26 per cent admitted they did not know, and 393 respondents, or almost 66 per cent, disagreed with the statement. The North Central Jurisdiction respondents disagreed with the statement at the rate of 77.91 per cent, while the Central disagreed only 41.66 per cent of

TABLE XV

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 8

The rhythm or "safe period" method of birth control has proven to be an effective means of preventing conception.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 7      | 29.17       | 7          | 29.17       | 10       | 41.66       | 24     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 16     | 9.82        | 20         | 12.27       | 127      | 77.91       | 163    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 23     | 16.79       | 25         | 18.25       | 89       | 64.96       | 137    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 17     | 20.24       | 19         | 22.62       | 48       | 57.14       | 84     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 9      | 8.65        | 30         | 28.85       | 65       | 62.50       | 104    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 17     | 20.00       | 14         | 16.47       | 54       | 63.53       | 85     |
| Laymen                     | 39     | 17.03       | 57         | 24.89       | 133      | 58.08       | 229    |
| Ministers                  | 50     | 13.59       | 58         | 15.76       | 260      | 70.65       | 368    |
| Male Laymen                | 21     | 16.41       | 33         | 25.78       | 74       | 57.81       | 128    |
| Female Laymen              | 18     | 17.82       | 24         | 23.76       | 59       | 58.42       | 101    |

TABLE XV (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 8

The rhythm or "safe period" method of birth control has proven to be an effective means of preventing conception.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 17     | 14.17       | 16         | 13.33       | 87       | 72.50       | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 52     | 14.44       | 64         | 17.78       | 244      | 67.78       | 360    |
| Over 55 years         | 20     | 17.09       | 35         | 29.91       | 62       | 53.00       | 117    |
| Total                 | 89     | 14.91       | 115        | 19.26       | 393      | 65.83       | 597    |



the time, and the South Central 57.14. There appears to be a wide difference in the response of ministers and laymen. Laymen disagree in only 58.08 per cent of the cases as compared with 70.65 per cent among ministers. Sex does not seem to be a factor in the responses to this question, but in the age groupings we again see the per cent of disagreement decrease as the age of the respondent increases. Respondents under 35 years of age disagree 72.50 per cent of the time; those 35 to 55, 67.78 per cent; and the over 55 respondents only 53.00 per cent. The high percentage of respondents who expressed no opinion leads this writer to conclude that Methodist social concerns leaders are not extensively aware either of the effectiveness of oral contraception or of the ineffectiveness of the rhythm method.

Readiness to support and promote denominational programs in the field of population control and planned parenthood. We come now to the seven questions which were designed to give an indication of the respondents readiness to support and promote denominational programs in the field of population control and planned parenthood. These questions, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, were also used to determine each respondents' "readiness score." The results of each of these seven questions were subjected to chi square analyses. These questions are of the Strongly Agree, Agree, No Opinion, Disagree, Strongly Disagree type

previously discussed.

The statement for question 9 was: "The church can play no significant role in solving the problem of the world's over-population." Table XVI indicates the responses to this statement. In this case a Disagree or Strongly Disagree was considered an indication of readiness.

As Table XVI indicates, 92.38 per cent of the respondents indicated that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Only 6.13 per cent felt that the statement was correct and that the church can play no significant role in solving the population problem. It should also be pointed out that the writer observed several cases where the respondent checked Agree or Strongly Agree and his responses to other questions are completely inconsistent with that answer. This is to suggest that the framing of the question, using the negative approach, may have confused some respondents and that the percentage of disagreement with the statement is even larger than the figures indicate.

The chi square analysis on this question indicates that geographical location or jurisdictional membership is not a significant factor in determining the responses to the question. Only in the case of the Central Jurisdiction are there any significant differences, and there the sample is so small as not to warrant the use of chi

TABLE XVI  
RESPONSE TO QUESTION 9

The church can play no significant role in solving the problem of the world's over-population.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 5      | 20.00       | 0          | 0.00        | 20       | 80.00       | 25     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 6      | 3.70        | 1          | 0.62        | 155      | 95.68       | 162    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 7      | 5.04        | 1          | 0.72        | 131      | 94.24       | 139    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 8      | 9.52        | 1          | 1.19        | 75       | 89.29       | 84     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 7      | 6.60        | 2          | 1.89        | 97       | 91.51       | 106    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 4      | 4.55        | 4          | 4.55        | 80       | 90.90       | 88     |
| Laymen                     | 18     | 7.69        | 5          | 2.14        | 211      | 90.17       | 234    |
| Ministers                  | 19     | 5.14        | 4          | 1.08        | 347      | 93.78       | 370    |
| Male Laymen                | 14     | 10.77       | 3          | 2.31        | 113      | 86.92       | 130    |
| Female Laymen              | 4      | 3.85        | 2          | 1.92        | 98       | 94.23       | 104    |

TABLE XVI (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 9

The church can play no significant role in solving the problem of the world's over-population.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 7      | 5.79        | 0          | 0.00        | 114      | 94.21       | 121    |
| 35 to 55              | 19     | 5.18        | 4          | 1.09        | 344      | 93.73       | 367    |
| Over 55 years         | 11     | 9.48        | 5          | 4.31        | 100      | 86.21       | 116    |
| Total                 | 37     | 6.13        | 9          | 1.49        | 558      | 92.38       | 604    |

square for purposes of comparison with much larger samples.

By the same token, there is no significant difference in the way in which laymen and ministers respond to this question. Laymen disagreed with the statement 90.17 per cent of the time and ministers 93.78 per cent. While the female laymen outscored the male laymen 94.23 per cent to 86.92 per cent, the difference between the two did not reach the level of significance accepted in this research.

Age differences, however, proved to be significant in the responses to this question. Table XVII shows the result of the chi square analysis of age as a factor in determining response to question 9. While there is no significant difference between the Under 35 group and the 35 to 55 group, there is a significant difference between each of these younger groups and the Over 55 age group. In the comparison of the youngest group with the oldest group it can be seen that the difference is at the .02 per cent level of significance, while the level of significance is .01 per cent in the comparison of the older group with the 35 to 55 group. This says that Methodist social concerns leaders under 55 years of age are significantly more convinced that the church can play an important role in solving the world's population problem than are the leaders over 55 years of age. Even so, the per cent of disagreement for the respondents over 55 years of age is 86.21 per cent. It can be said that respondents generally

TABLE XVII  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION 9

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 7      | 5.79        | 0          | 0.00        | 114      | 94.21       | 121    |
| Over 55 years         | 11     | 9.48        | 5          | 4.31        | 100      | 86.21       | 116    |

Chi square = 8.855; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .02

|               |    |      |   |      |     |       |     |
|---------------|----|------|---|------|-----|-------|-----|
| 35 to 55      | 19 | 5.18 | 4 | 1.09 | 344 | 93.73 | 367 |
| Over 55 years | 11 | 9.48 | 5 | 4.31 | 100 | 86.21 | 116 |

Chi square = 9.371; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .01

are overwhelmingly not in agreement with this statement.

Table XVIII shows the response to the statement of question 12. The statement was: "The Methodist Church should support the work of reputable planned parenthood agencies and clinics."

Among the jurisdictions only the Southeastern fell below the 90 per cent level of agreement with this statement. Even the Central Jurisdiction had 91.67 per cent, or 22 of 24 respondents, indicate their agreement on this question. The highest per cent of agreement again came in the North Central Jurisdiction where the figure was 96.34 per cent. Chi square analysis revealed three significant differences involving a comparison of jurisdictional responses. These differences are explained in Table XIX. It should be noted that in each case the difference shows a northern jurisdiction significantly more often in agreement with the statement for question 12 than a southern jurisdiction.

There are no significant differences in the way in which ministers and laymen, male and female laymen, and the various age groups responded to this statement. In every case there was better than 91 per cent agreement, and the highest per cent of disagreement reached was 4.23 per cent among respondents over 55 years of age.

Looking at the total figures for this question, we may conclude that respondents are very much agreed that

TABLE XVIII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 12

The Methodist Church should support the work of reputable planned parenthood agencies and clinics.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 22     | 91.67       | 0          | 0.00        | 2        | 8.33        | 24     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 158    | 96.34       | 2          | 1.22        | 4        | 2.44        | 164    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 133    | 95.68       | 5          | 3.60        | 1        | 0.72        | 139    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 76     | 91.57       | 4          | 4.82        | 3        | 3.61        | 83     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 96     | 89.72       | 10         | 9.35        | 1        | 0.93        | 107    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 82     | 95.35       | 3          | 3.49        | 1        | 1.16        | 86     |
| Laymen                     | 215    | 91.88       | 13         | 5.56        | 6        | 2.56        | 234    |
| Ministers                  | 352    | 95.39       | 11         | 2.98        | 6        | 1.63        | 369    |
| Male Laymen                | 118    | 92.19       | 6          | 4.69        | 4        | 3.12        | 128    |
| Female Laymen              | 97     | 91.51       | 7          | 6.60        | 2        | 1.89        | 106    |



TABLE XVIII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 12

The Methodist Church should support the work of reputable planned parenthood agencies and clinics.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 113    | 93.39       | 7          | 5.78        | 1        | 0.83        | 121    |
| 35 to 55              | 346    | 95.05       | 12         | 3.30        | 6        | 1.65        | 364    |
| Over 55 years         | 108    | 91.54       | 5          | 4.23        | 5        | 4.23        | 118    |
| Total                 | 567    | 94.03       | 24         | 3.98        | 12       | 1.99        | 603    |

TABLE XIX  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION 12

| Groups of Respondents                                                   | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                                                                         | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| North Central Jurisdiction                                              | 158    | 96.34       | 2          | 1.22        | 4        | 2.44        | 164    |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction                                               | 96     | 89.72       | 10         | 9.35        | 1        | 0.93        | 107    |
| Chi square = 9.668; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .01 |        |             |            |             |          |             |        |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction                                               | 133    | 95.68       | 5          | 3.60        | 1        | 0.72        | 139    |
| South Central Jurisdiction                                              | 76     | 91.57       | 4          | 4.82        | 3        | 3.61        | 83     |
| Chi square = 7.986; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .02 |        |             |            |             |          |             |        |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction                                               | 133    | 95.68       | 5          | 3.60        | 1        | 0.72        | 139    |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction                                               | 96     | 89.72       | 10         | 9.35        | 1        | 0.93        | 107    |

Chi square = 6.028; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .05

the Methodist Church should support the work of reputable planned parenthood clinics and agencies. In all, 94.03 of the 603 respondents who answered this question indicated their agreement. On the other hand, only 1.99 per cent disagreed, and 3.98 per cent had no opinion.

In his research among seminary students, James E. Allen discovered that over 95 per cent of Methodist seminary students plan to give premarital and marital counsel in the area of family planning. Another 60 per cent indicated they even plan to counsel with couples about the different methods of contraception. Seven out of ten, or 70 per cent, indicated they felt their seminary should offer thorough training in family planning, but less than 40 per cent of the last-semester seniors said they had received it.<sup>4</sup> Question 13 in the present study deals with the same matter. The statement was:

Methodist ministers should receive seminary training preparing them to give planned parenthood information and advice to those couples desiring it in pre-marital or marital counseling.

Table XX shows the nature of the responses to this statement.

Altogether, slightly less than 85 per cent of the respondents indicated that they agreed with this proposition. Fewer than 11 per cent disagreed, and 5.13 per cent chose not to express an opinion. Even though these

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

TABLE XX

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 13

Methodist ministers should receive seminary training preparing them to give planned parenthood information and advice to those couples desiring it in pre-marital or marital counseling.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 22     | 88.00       | 0          | 0.00        | 3        | 12.00       | 25     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 139    | 84.76       | 7          | 4.27        | 18       | 10.97       | 164    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 111    | 79.86       | 9          | 6.47        | 19       | 13.67       | 139    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 65     | 77.38       | 10         | 11.90       | 9        | 10.72       | 84     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 94     | 88.68       | 4          | 3.77        | 8        | 7.55        | 106    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 80     | 93.03       | 1          | 1.16        | 5        | 5.81        | 86     |
| Laymen                     | 197    | 83.83       | 13         | 5.53        | 25       | 10.64       | 235    |
| Ministers                  | 314    | 85.09       | 18         | 4.88        | 37       | 10.03       | 369    |
| Male Laymen                | 111    | 86.05       | 7          | 5.42        | 11       | 8.53        | 129    |
| Female Laymen              | 86     | 81.13       | 6          | 5.66        | 14       | 13.21       | 106    |

TABLE XX (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 13

Methodist ministers should receive seminary training preparing them to give planned parenthood information and advice to those couples desiring it in premarital or marital counseling.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 108    | 90.00       | 4          | 3.33        | 8        | 6.63        | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 306    | 83.84       | 22         | 6.03        | 37       | 10.13       | 365    |
| Over 55 years         | 97     | 81.51       | 5          | 4.20        | 17       | 14.29       | 119    |
| Total                 | 511    | 84.60       | 31         | 5.13        | 62       | 10.27       | 604    |

figures are not quite as overwhelming as those on the two previous "readiness" questions, we still are led to conclude that a significantly large number of Methodist social concerns leaders feel that this type of training ought to be a part of the curriculum of our seminaries.

In this case the male laymen seem to agree more often than do the female laymen, unlike several of the questions previously considered. Here the men agree in 86.05 per cent of the cases and the women only in 81.13 per cent. The difference is not statistically significant at the minimum level of acceptance established for the research. Laymen and ministers are very close in their responses to this question. At first glance, age would seem to be a significant variable in determining response to this question, but closer analysis reveals no significant differences. Of special interest is the 90 per cent agreement on the part of the youngest respondents, the vast majority of whom were ministers. This may suggest a slightly increased feeling on the part of those closest to seminary in terms of years for the type of counseling training which will better prepare them to meet the family planning inquiries of their counselees.

The only differences of any statistical significance on this question came in the jurisdictional responses. Chi square analysis reveals that the Western Jurisdiction, at 93.03 per cent Agree response, is

significantly more agreeable to this proposition than the respondents in the Northeastern Jurisdiction at the .05 level, and the South Central Jurisdiction at the .01 level. Table XXI shows these differences. In every other case the differences were not statistically significant. Even the Central Jurisdiction indicated agreement with this statement in 22 of 25 responses for 88 per cent.

The statement for question 14 was: "The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of the population explosion and its implications for Christians." Table XXII indicates the responses to this statement.

The responses to this question do not warrant lengthy comment. Suffice it to say that 86.14 per cent of the 606 respondents who answered this question agree that such a study is needed and should be undertaken by the Methodist Church. Only 5.28 per cent did not agree, and 8.58 per cent had no opinion. The responses as they break down by the various groupings are amazingly uniform and consistent. Chi square analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in the response of any of the groups compared on this question. This writer feels that 86.14 per cent affirmative response is a substantial indication of the concern and readiness of the respondents for some solid information as to the population explosion and its implications for Christians.

The question of whether or not the Methodist Church

TABLE XXI  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION 13

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 65     | 77.38       | 10         | 11.90       | 9        | 10.72       | 84     |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 80     | 93.03       | 1          | 1.16        | 5        | 5.81        | 86     |

Chi square = 11.660; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .01

|                           |     |       |   |      |    |       |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|---|------|----|-------|-----|
| Northeastern Jurisdiction | 111 | 79.86 | 9 | 6.47 | 19 | 13.67 | 139 |
| Western Jurisdiction      | 80  | 93.03 | 1 | 1.16 | 5  | 5.81  | 86  |

Chi square = 7.681; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .05



TABLE XXII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 14

The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of the population explosion and its implications for Christians.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 23     | 92.00       | 1          | 4.00        | 1        | 4.00        | 25     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 135    | 82.32       | 17         | 10.36       | 12       | 7.32        | 164    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 125    | 88.65       | 11         | 7.80        | 5        | 3.55        | 141    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 72     | 85.72       | 7          | 8.33        | 5        | 5.95        | 84     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 92     | 88.46       | 8          | 7.69        | 4        | 3.85        | 104    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 75     | 85.23       | 8          | 9.09        | 5        | 5.68        | 88     |
| Laymen                     | 201    | 85.17       | 21         | 8.90        | 14       | 5.93        | 236    |
| Ministers                  | 321    | 86.76       | 31         | 8.38        | 18       | 4.86        | 370    |
| Male Laymen                | 110    | 84.62       | 9          | 6.92        | 11       | 8.46        | 130    |
| Female Laymen              | 91     | 85.85       | 12         | 11.32       | 3        | 2.83        | 106    |

TABLE XXII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 14

The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of the population explosion and its implications for Christians.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 98     | 81.67       | 16         | 13.33       | 6        | 5.00        | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 322    | 88.22       | 24         | 6.57        | 19       | 5.21        | 365    |
| Over 55 years         | 102    | 84.30       | 12         | 9.92        | 7        | 5.78        | 121    |
| Total                 | 522    | 86.14       | 52         | 8.58        | 32       | 5.28        | 606    |

should take an active part in establishing planned parenthood agencies and clinics brought a much more mixed response. The statement for question 15 was: "The Methodist Church should strive to establish planned parenthood agencies and clinics where such a service is not available." Table XXIII shows the response to this statement.

In the Allen study nearly 90 per cent of the seminary students indicated their willingness to involve themselves personally by helping to sponsor the first birth control clinic in their town.<sup>5</sup> In this study 71.16 per cent of the respondents agreed that the Methodist Church should be involved, but this response does not necessarily indicate a personal commitment. In all, 11.64 per cent felt that the Methodist Church should not involve itself in this way, and a large 17.20 per cent had no opinion on this question.

Among the jurisdictions it is interesting to note that on this question the Central Jurisdiction respondents are high in the Agree column with 82.61 per cent. The South Central Jurisdiction is low with only 63.75 per cent in agreement. Once again because of the small numbers involved in the Central Jurisdiction, chi square analysis reveals the only significant difference to be between the Northeastern Jurisdiction and the South Central. The

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

TABLE XXIII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 15

The Methodist Church should strive to establish planned parenthood clinics and agencies where such a service is not available.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 19     | 82.61       | 1          | 4.35        | 3        | 13.04       | 23     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 113    | 69.33       | 30         | 18.40       | 20       | 12.27       | 163    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 107    | 77.54       | 23         | 16.67       | 8        | 5.79        | 138    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 51     | 63.75       | 14         | 17.50       | 15       | 18.75       | 80     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 70     | 67.96       | 19         | 18.45       | 14       | 13.59       | 103    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 62     | 72.09       | 15         | 17.44       | 9        | 10.47       | 86     |
| Laymen                     | 161    | 70.31       | 39         | 17.03       | 29       | 12.66       | 229    |
| Ministers                  | 261    | 71.70       | 63         | 17.31       | 40       | 10.99       | 364    |
| Male Laymen                | 95     | 73.64       | 16         | 12.40       | 18       | 13.96       | 129    |
| Female Laymen              | 66     | 66.00       | 23         | 23.00       | 11       | 11.00       | 100    |

TABLE XXIII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 15

The Methodist Church should strive to establish planned parenthood clinics and agencies where such a service is not available.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 88     | 73.33       | 24         | 20.00       | 8        | 6.67        | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 261    | 72.91       | 54         | 15.08       | 43       | 12.01       | 358    |
| Over 55 years         | 73     | 63.48       | 24         | 20.87       | 18       | 15.65       | 115    |
| Total                 | 422    | 71.16       | 102        | 17.20       | 69       | 11.64       | 593    |

level of significance is .01. Complete information is contained in Table XXIV.

In the other groupings there are no significant differences. Laymen and ministers are uncommonly close on this question, but the male laymen again outscored the female laymen. In the age grouping there seems to be quite a spread between the group under 35 years of age and the group over 55. Chi square analysis, however, reveals the difference is not significant at the minimum level accepted here.

The statement for question 16 was: "Methodist Annual Conference pronouncements should more frequently include resolutions in the field of world population problems." Table XXV illustrates the number and percentage of response in each category for this question.

Respondents indicated a little distrust of annual conference pronouncements. Several who checked No Opinion wrote on the questionnaire statements to the effect that we need to stop making pronouncements and start taking action. Nevertheless a total of 73.45 per cent of 595 respondents indicated their agreement with this suggestion. Fewer than 10 per cent of the respondents, 9.58 per cent to be exact, disagreed, and 16.97 per cent did not give an opinion.

Among the jurisdictions the surprising Central Jurisdiction agreed at the rate of 91.66 per cent.

TABLE XXIV  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION 15

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 107    | 77.54       | 23         | 16.67       | 8        | 5.79        | 138    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 51     | 63.75       | 14         | 17.50       | 15       | 18.75       | 80     |

Chi square = 10.727; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .01

TABLE XXV

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 16

Methodist Annual Conference pronouncements should more frequently include resolutions in the field of world population problems.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 22     | 91.66       | 1          | 4.17        | 1        | 4.17        | 24     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 122    | 74.85       | 31         | 19.02       | 10       | 6.13        | 163    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 108    | 77.70       | 20         | 14.39       | 11       | 7.91        | 139    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 55     | 67.90       | 9          | 11.11       | 17       | 20.99       | 81     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 64     | 62.14       | 26         | 25.24       | 13       | 12.62       | 103    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 66     | 77.65       | 14         | 16.47       | 5        | 5.88        | 85     |
| Laymen                     | 164    | 71.93       | 41         | 17.98       | 23       | 10.09       | 228    |
| Ministers                  | 273    | 74.39       | 60         | 16.35       | 34       | 9.26        | 367    |
| Male Laymen                | 87     | 67.97       | 25         | 19.53       | 16       | 12.50       | 128    |
| Female Laymen              | 77     | 77.00       | 16         | 16.00       | 7        | 7.00        | 100    |



TABLE XXV (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 16

Methodist Annual Conference pronouncements should more frequently include resolutions in the field of world population problems.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 88     | 73.33       | 26         | 21.67       | 6        | 5.00        | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 260    | 72.63       | 57         | 15.92       | 41       | 11.45       | 358    |
| Over 55 years         | 89     | 76.07       | 18         | 15.38       | 10       | 8.55        | 117    |
| Total                 | 437    | 73.45       | 101        | 16.97       | 57       | 9.58        | 595    |

Unfortunately, with only 24 responses from this jurisdiction significant comparisons with the other jurisdictions cannot be made. The other jurisdictions revealed some very interesting and very significant differences in response. The Northeastern and Western Jurisdictions were high in percentage of agreement with 77.70 per cent and 77.65 per cent respectively. The Southeastern Jurisdiction was again low with 62.14 per cent. The chi square analyses reported in Table XXVI indicate clearly the differences in response to this question on a jurisdictional basis. In all but one of the cases illustrated it is a matter of a northern or western jurisdiction agreeing in more significant numbers than a southern jurisdiction. The one exception is a comparison of the two southern jurisdictions.

The use of chi square indicates no significant comparisons can be made between the responses of laymen and ministers, male and female laymen, or age groups on this particular question.

The last of the "readiness" questions was question 17. The statement was: "The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of planned parenthood for Christian families." Table XXVII contains the responses to this statement.

This question and question 14 are similar in nature. The response in this question to a study of

TABLE XXVI  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION 16

| Groups of Respondents                                                    | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                                                                          | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| North Central Jurisdiction                                               | 122    | 74.85       | 31         | 19.02       | 10       | 6.13        | 163    |
| South Central Jurisdiction                                               | 55     | 67.90       | 9          | 11.11       | 17       | 20.99       | 81     |
| Chi square = 12.898; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .01 |        |             |            |             |          |             |        |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction                                                | 108    | 77.70       | 20         | 14.39       | 11       | 7.91        | 139    |
| South Central Jurisdiction                                               | 55     | 67.90       | 9          | 11.11       | 17       | 20.99       | 81     |
| Chi square = 8.868; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .02  |        |             |            |             |          |             |        |
| Western Jurisdiction                                                     | 66     | 77.65       | 14         | 16.47       | 5        | 5.88        | 85     |
| South Central Jurisdiction                                               | 55     | 67.90       | 9          | 11.11       | 17       | 20.99       | 81     |
| Chi square = 8.129; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .02  |        |             |            |             |          |             |        |

TABLE XXVI (Continued)  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION 16

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 64     | 62.14       | 26         | 25.24       | 13       | 12.62       | 103    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 55     | 67.90       | 9          | 11.11       | 17       | 20.99       | 81     |

Chi square = 6.679; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .05

|                           |     |       |    |       |    |       |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|-----|
| Southeastern Jurisdiction | 64  | 62.14 | 26 | 25.24 | 13 | 12.62 | 103 |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction | 108 | 77.70 | 20 | 14.39 | 11 | 7.91  | 139 |

Chi square = 6.656; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .05

TABLE XXVII

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 17

The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of planned parenthood for Christian families.

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Central Jurisdiction       | 21     | 87.50       | 0          | 0.00        | 3        | 12.50       | 24     |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 118    | 72.84       | 22         | 13.58       | 22       | 13.58       | 162    |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 113    | 83.09       | 14         | 10.29       | 9        | 6.62        | 136    |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 60     | 75.00       | 10         | 12.50       | 10       | 12.50       | 80     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 72     | 71.29       | 16         | 15.84       | 13       | 12.87       | 101    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 71     | 83.53       | 11         | 12.94       | 3        | 3.53        | 85     |
| Laymen                     | 166    | 73.78       | 30         | 13.33       | 29       | 12.89       | 225    |
| Ministers                  | 289    | 79.61       | 43         | 11.85       | 31       | 8.54        | 363    |
| Male Laymen                | 94     | 75.20       | 13         | 10.40       | 18       | 14.40       | 125    |
| Female Laymen              | 72     | 72.00       | 17         | 17.00       | 11       | 11.00       | 100    |

TABLE XXVII (Continued)

## RESPONSE TO QUESTION 17

The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of planned parenthood for Christian families.

| Groups of Respondents | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                       | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| Under 35 years        | 94     | 78.33       | 17         | 14.17       | 9        | 7.50        | 120    |
| 35 to 55              | 274    | 76.75       | 45         | 12.61       | 38       | 10.64       | 357    |
| Over 55 years         | 87     | 78.38       | 11         | 9.91        | 13       | 11.71       | 111    |
| Total                 | 455    | 77.38       | 73         | 12.42       | 60       | 10.20       | 588    |

planned parenthood was not as great as the agreement to a study of the population explosion. In this case 77.38 per cent of the respondents indicated agreement with the notion of a church-wide study of planned parenthood for Christian families, while 10.20 per cent disagreed, and 12.42 expressed no opinion. There seems to be a little more reticence to study planned parenthood than there is to study the less personal population problem.

There are no significant differences in responses on the basis of position in the church, sex, or age. The ministers agree in greater proportion than do laymen, but the difference is not significant. As in the other "readiness" questions the male laymen are in agreement more often than female laymen. The various age groupings are closer in their response to this question than in any other case previously considered.

The jurisdictions range from 71.29 per cent agreement in the Southeastern Jurisdiction to 83.53 per cent in the Western Jurisdiction (the Central Jurisdiction was high with 87.50 per cent agreement). The only significant difference between jurisdictions, illustrated in Table XXVIII, is between the North Central Jurisdiction and the Western.

Evaluation of the "readiness" scores. Using the system of scoring explained earlier, each questionnaire returned was assigned a score on the basis of the

TABLE XXVIII  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTION 17

| Groups of Respondents      | Agree  |             | No Opinion |             | Disagree |             | Total  |
|----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
|                            | Number | Per-centage | Number     | Per-centage | Number   | Per-centage | Number |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 118    | 72.84       | 22         | 13.58       | 22       | 13.58       | 162    |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 71     | 83.53       | 11         | 12.94       | 3        | 3.53        | 85     |

Chi square = 7.094; Degrees of freedom = 2; Level of significance = .05



respondents answers to the seven "readiness" questions. The scores were placed on a scale ranging from a possible low score of -14 to a high of +14. The next step was to calculate the "mean readiness score" for each of the several variable groups being considered. This is a somewhat more refined measure of readiness since it takes into account differences in intensity of feeling as indicated by checking Agree or Strongly Agree and Disagree or Strongly Disagree. These means, along with the number and standard deviation for each group, appear in Table XXIX.

On the basis of the interpretation of these scores outlined earlier, it is clear that in every group the "mean readiness score" falls in the ready category. A score of +8 or higher was required for the very ready designation. It should be noted that all the "mean readiness scores" fall within the +5 to +8 range. The highest group score is among respondents under 35 years of age where the mean is +7.860. The lowest score came in the South Central Jurisdiction where the mean is +5.753. The only other group which scored below +6 was the Over 55 age group where the mean is +5.943.

The "mean readiness score" for all 611 respondents is +7.172 with a standard deviation of only 1.531. This is a clear indication of the overall readiness of Methodist social concerns leaders to support and promote programs in the area of population control and planned

TABLE XXIX  
MEAN READINESS SCORES

| Groups of Respondents      | Number | Mean   | Standard Deviation |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|--------------------|
| Central Jurisdiction       | 25     | +6.880 | 4.459              |
| North Central Jurisdiction | 164    | +7.293 | 3.003              |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 141    | +7.582 | 2.463              |
| South Central Jurisdiction | 85     | +5.753 | 2.835              |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 107    | +6.467 | 2.165              |
| Western Jurisdiction       | 89     | +7.730 | 2.539              |
| Laymen                     | 240    | +6.467 | 2.365              |
| Ministers                  | 371    | +7.385 | 1.673              |
| Male Laymen                | 132    | +6.402 | 2.967              |
| Female Laymen              | 108    | +6.611 | 2.503              |
| Under 35 years             | 121    | +7.860 | 2.490              |
| 35 to 55                   | 367    | +6.842 | 1.953              |
| Over 55 years              | 123    | +5.943 | 2.668              |
| Total                      | 611    | +7.172 | 1.531              |

parenthood which their denomination might choose to sponsor.

In order to determine whether there was any significant difference in the overall "readiness" of the various groups within the total group of respondents, the statistical test for determining the significance of difference between means was employed. The formula used in this survey was formula 16B from Statistics for Sociologists by Margaret J. Hagood and Daniel O. Price.<sup>6</sup> The standard deviation units were calculated for the two means being compared, and these were used to determine the level of significance of difference between the two means. As in the chi square analyses described earlier, the 5 per cent level of significance was accepted as the minimum level in the calculation of the difference between means.

Table XXX gives the complete information on those groups where a significant difference was found. The groups being compared, the standard deviation units, and the level of significance are included. It should be noted that because of the relatively small sample, the "mean readiness score" of the Central Jurisdiction could not be meaningfully compared with the scores of other jurisdictions.

These comparisons are extremely interesting. For

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<sup>6</sup>Margaret J. Hagood and Daniel O. Price, Statistics for Sociologists (New York: Henry Holt, 1952), p. 322.

TABLE XXX  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS

| Groups being associated                                   | Standard<br>Deviation<br>Units | Level of<br>Significance |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| North Central Jurisdiction and Northeastern Jurisdiction  | 0.92                           | n.s.*                    |
| North Central Jurisdiction and South Central Jurisdiction | 3.89                           | .001                     |
| North Central Jurisdiction and Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 2.62                           | .01                      |
| North Central Jurisdiction and Western Jurisdiction       | 1.23                           | n.s.                     |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction and South Central Jurisdiction  | 4.73                           | .001                     |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction and Southeastern Jurisdiction   | 3.78                           | .001                     |
| Northeastern Jurisdiction and Western Jurisdiction        | 0.44                           | n.s.                     |
| South Central Jurisdiction and Southeastern Jurisdiction  | 1.92                           | n.s.                     |
| South Central Jurisdiction and Western Jurisdiction       | 4.83                           | .001                     |
| Southeastern Jurisdiction and Western Jurisdiction        | 3.70                           | .001                     |
| Laymen and Ministers                                      | 5.22                           | .001                     |
| Male Laymen and Female Laymen                             | 0.59                           | n.s.                     |

\*n.s. = no significance

TABLE XXX (Continued)  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS

| Groups being associated          | Standard<br>Deviation<br>Units | Level of<br>Significance |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Under 35 years and 35 to 55      | 4.12                           | .001                     |
| Under 35 years and Over 55 years | 5.81                           | .001                     |
| 35 to 55 and Over 55 years       | 3.44                           | .001                     |

example, among the jurisdictions every instance of a significant difference in "mean readiness scores" occurs when a southern jurisdiction is being compared with a northern or western jurisdiction. When the northern and western jurisdictions are compared there is no significant difference, and the same is true of the comparison of the two southern jurisdictions. The level of significance is also of interest. With only one exception, the level of significance reaches .001, which is an indication of an extremely significant difference.<sup>7</sup> The exception to this observation is the comparison of the "mean readiness scores" of the North Central and Southeastern Jurisdictions, and here the level of significance is .01, which is still considered highly significant.<sup>8</sup>

The test of significance applied here also indicates an extremely significant difference in the "mean readiness scores" of ministers and laymen. The mean for 240 laymen is +6.467 and for the 371 ministers, +7.385. As Table XXX indicates, the level of significance was .001. The comparison of male laymen and female laymen, however, indicated no significant difference. The mean for the women was slightly higher at +6.611 as compared with +6.402 for the men, but the difference is not significant.

As many of the individual questions indicated,

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

there is an extremely significant difference in the way in which the three age groupings answered the "readiness" questions. This difference is reflected in the calculation of the difference between the "mean readiness score" of each group.

With a mean of +7.860, the respondents who were under 35 years of age were found to be significantly higher on the readiness scale than either of the other two groups. In the comparisons of the Under 35 group with both the 35 to 55 group and the Over 55 group, the level of significance was as high as .001. While the level of significance is the same, the higher standard deviation units in the comparison of the Under 35 group with the Over 55 group indicates an even greater significance of difference. The difference between the 35 to 55 group, with a mean of +6.842, and the Over 55 group, with a mean of +5.943, was also significant at the .001 level. These figures substantiate the observation made earlier that "readiness" to support and promote denominational programs in the field of population control and planned parenthood decreases as the age of the respondent increases. It remains high, however, in even the oldest age group.

Younger respondents, ministers, and respondents living in the northern or western jurisdictions are significantly more "ready" than older respondents, laymen, and respondents living in the southern jurisdictions, even

though in all groups there is a high degree of readiness.



## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Involved in this study of attitudes toward family planning and the role of the church were 611 members of Methodist annual conference Boards of Christian Social Concerns in 76 annual conferences from all parts of the nation. A random sample of one-third of both the ministerial and lay members of these boards was selected to receive the pre-tested, pre-coded, printed questionnaire developed by the writer. In all, 869 questionnaires were sent, and the 611 responses represent an excellent 70.31 per cent return.

A scale purporting to measure the readiness of respondents to support and promote denominational programs in the field of population control and planned parenthood was constructed by the writer for use in the questionnaire. From it a "mean readiness score" was derived for each respondent. This made it possible to determine which of the variables included in the study were significantly associated with readiness as it is described above. In addition, the knowledge of the respondents with regard to the current world population situation and their attitudes toward contraception and knowledge about specific methods of contraception were studied.

The data accumulated from the seven "readiness"

questions were subjected to chi square analysis. The statistical test of the difference between two means was also used to determine the significance of the difference between the means within the various sub-group variables. In both the chi square analysis and the test of the difference between means, the 5 per cent level of statistical significance was accepted as the minimum level for this study.

Summary of the findings. 1. Responses to the questions designed to test knowledge of the population problem indicate a very widespread awareness on the part of Methodist social concerns leaders of the nature and the dangers of the population problem. A large majority of the respondents recognize the population explosion as one of the chief causes of international tension and modern war. Over two-thirds of the respondents had factual information on the current rate of population growth as well as future projections of the world population figure. Again, a large majority recognized the race which is currently under way between the world food supply and the population who use that food supply. Finally, over 90 per cent of the respondents indicated their opinion that the population explosion was important enough to warrant widespread public concern. On the basis of these findings we happily reject our first major hypothesis. Methodist social concerns leaders are very much aware of the gravity

of the world population explosion.

2. Methodist leaders in the field of Christian social concerns regard the problem of our rapidly exploding population as more significant than the problems of juvenile delinquency or the use of alcohol and tobacco. They do not regard it as more important, however, than the problems of race relations, international tensions, and world poverty. Thus, our second major hypothesis cannot be totally rejected. The writer admits that the population explosion was ranked higher than anticipated, but since it was outranked by poverty in the world, which is so directly caused by over-population, the writer feels the second major hypothesis has been substantiated.

3. The question of the use of contraceptives in family planning is an extremely important one and was so regarded by the respondents in this study. Methodist social concerns leaders are concerned about limiting population through the use of contraception in all parts of the world. An overwhelming 94.37 per cent of the respondents in this study gave assent to the use of American foreign aid funds for technical and financial assistance in the area of planned parenthood to those nations requesting it.

On the critical question of the purpose of the marital sex act, critical because a theology of contraception rests on the purpose of marital sex, all but one

per cent of these social concerns leaders agreed either that the mutual expression of love was the primary purpose or that the mutual expression of love and procreation share equally as the purposes of the marital sex act. This is overwhelming support for the Protestant theological position on the use of contraceptives in family planning.

Methodist social concerns leaders accept a wide variety of reasons for using contraceptives to prevent a pregnancy in marriage. Most important is the health of the mother. The ability of the parents to provide the basic necessities of life for their family and the desire to space the arrival of children were also given as important reasons for using contraception. Concern over the population explosion, however, was not considered to be an important reason for using contraception. Respondents here reflected a fairly widespread attitude in the United States, an attitude which does not include personal involvement in attempts to control population through the limitation of family size. Our third major hypothesis appears to have been borne out in this research.

4. Methodist social concerns leaders do not regard contraception as immoral. Fewer than 1.5 per cent of the respondents felt that contraception was immoral and should never be undertaken by a Christian couple. On the other hand, an impressive 97.20 per cent disagreed with this

proposition and affirmed the morality of contraception. This stand was given further support as respondents indicated which of specific methods of contraception they considered to be morally acceptable for use by a married Christian couple. Specific methods approved by large majorities of the respondents included diaphragm, oral contraceptives, rhythm method, foams, jellies, suppositories, and condom. The only methods held suspect by the respondents were coitus interruptus, or withdrawal, and abstinence from performance of the marital sex act. The evidence seems clear; the respondents in this survey do not regard contraception or methods of contraception as a moral issue. The question is rather one of which method is most acceptable to both partners. There can be no doubt that Methodist social concerns leaders do not regard contraception, or specific methods of contraception, as a question of morality. Thus, our fourth major hypothesis is substantiated and accepted.

5. The official position of the Methodist Church, that planned parenthood practiced in Christian conscience fulfills rather than violates the will of God, very definitely represents the attitude of an extremely high percentage of the social concerns leaders who were included in this study. In all, almost 97 per cent of those who answered the question relating to this matter indicated their complete agreement with the statement which

represented the official stand on planned parenthood taken by the Methodist Church at its 1960 General Conference. The fifth major hypothesis on the basis of which this study was undertaken is positively proved by the research data.

6. The sixth major hypothesis explained earlier dealt with the question of the respondents knowledge of the effectiveness of certain methods of contraception. In this study, respondents were questioned about the effectiveness of two specific contraceptive methods, the newly developed oral contraceptives and the rhythm method. These two methods were selected because of the extremely high degree of effectiveness of the oral contraceptives and the relatively low rate of effectiveness of the rhythm method. Generally speaking, respondents were not completely clear in their knowledge of the effectiveness of these two methods. While slightly better than a majority of the respondents agreed that the oral contraceptives are effective and disagreed that the rhythm method is effective in preventing conception, there were a significant number of responses in the No Opinion column. There were at least enough to indicate a considerable lack of knowledge among Methodist social concerns leaders as to the relative effectiveness of these two well known contraceptive methods. Thus, our sixth hypothesis can be accepted.

7. The calculation of the "mean readiness score"

for each of the groups which represents a variable being considered shows clearly the state of readiness of the respondents. By readiness is meant the readiness of respondents to support and promote programs in the area of the population explosion and planned parenthood which the Methodist Church might initiate from the level of the General Conference. The mean score for the total response was calculated at slightly above +7. This would mean a "mean readiness score" for the total group which borders between the ready designation and the very ready designation. This would seem to substantiate the statement in the seventh major hypothesis to the effect that generally leaders in the field of social concerns in the Methodist Church are ready to support and promote General Conference programs in the fields of the population explosion and planned parenthood.

8. Using the statistical test for the difference between means, we discovered that there is a significant difference between several of the groups compared as to their "mean readiness score." Results of this test indicate that only a part of the eighth major hypothesis can be considered valid. We suggested that there would be no significant differences on the basis of the variables being used except in the case of the southern jurisdictions as they compared with the northern and western jurisdictions. Our hypothesis about the differences on a

jurisdictional basis was shown to be correct. In every case where the mean of either the South Central or the Southeastern Jurisdiction was compared with the mean of the North Central, the Northeastern, or the Western Jurisdiction, a significant difference between the means was found to exist. On the other hand, no significant differences appeared when the northern jurisdictions were compared, when they were compared with the Western Jurisdiction, or when the two southern jurisdictions were compared. On the basis of the jurisdictional variable, then, our hypothesis can be seen to be accurate.

Other significant differences also appeared, however, where the writer did not anticipate their appearance. Ministers were found to have a significantly higher "mean readiness score" than laymen. The younger age groupings were both found to have significantly higher scores than the older group, and the Under 35 group was significantly higher in readiness than the 35 to 55 group. There was no significant difference in the score of the male laymen and the female laymen. The differences on the basis of position in the church and on the basis of sex were not anticipated, and thus the portions of the eighth hypothesis which deal with these questions must be rejected.

Conclusions. Before the conclusions of this research are set down, it should again be pointed out that



the group from which this sample was taken is a very specialized group. Since only members of Methodist annual conference Boards of Christian Social Concerns were surveyed, it is extremely difficult to make generalizations about the attitudes and opinions of any larger group. We must conclude that these answers represent only the group surveyed and cannot be accurately applied to other groups.

Then too, the sample from one of the jurisdictions, the Central, was so small as to make it impossible to make significant comparisons with other jurisdictions. This should be taken into consideration when reaching conclusions involving the Central Jurisdiction.

The knowledge exhibited by the respondents in the area of the world population explosion was very surprising to the writer. Generally, awareness of the population explosion is limited because of the fact that most of the explosion is taking place in countries many thousands of miles from the United States. Recent emphasis in magazines and newspapers on population problems could account for the extensive information now held by these respondents, but it is almost impossible to say positively what factors are responsible. The important point is that these leaders in the social concerns field are aware that the population problem is a serious one. Furthermore, they understand some of the deeper ramifications of the problem. They associate population increase with

international tensions and modern war. They recognize the significance of the present race between food supply and population. Perhaps most important for the Methodist Board of Christian Social Concerns is the fact that social concerns leaders on the annual conference level consider the problem of the world's over-population as more deserving of an immediate solution than either juvenile delinquency or the use of alcohol and tobacco. In this belief, the writer heartily concurs. It seems that as a church we might be well advised to reconsider the time and funds which are being spent on juvenile delinquency and especially alcohol and tobacco, as that expense compares with what we have done in the area of over-population.

On the question of using contraceptives in an attempt to plan families and to limit the size of families as an answer to the population explosion, respondents are very much in agreement that this is morally acceptable. They recognize that the mutual expression of human love at least shares equally with procreation as a purpose of the marital sex act, and many respondents regard the mutual expression of love as the primary purpose of marital sex. With this attitude these social concerns leaders are ripe for a clear exposition of the Protestant theological basis for the use of contraception in family planning. That theological position must necessarily be based on an understanding of marital sex which permits of purposes

other than simply procreation. They would, and obviously do, use contraceptives personally to prevent pregnancy for a wide variety of reasons including the health of the mother, the financial stability of the family, and in order to limit the size of the family. When it comes to the question of the world's increasing population, however, only a small portion of the respondents, less than half, indicate that they would use contraception because of the population problem. This clearly indicates a lack of personal identification of the respondents with the population problem. They recognize the significance of the problem, but they have not yet grasped the importance of personal responsibility for helping keep population growth under control. The implications for the church are clear.

Virtually all methods of contraception are acceptable on a moral basis. There apparently remains some question as to the morality of withdrawal and abstinence as means of preventing conception. In general, the morality of contraception measures is not to be questioned. The question of the effectiveness of contraceptives is not as easily answered. Respondents are not sure of the effectiveness of oral contraceptives or of the rhythm method. We might conclude that since these two methods are most widely known for their effectiveness, in the case of the oral contraceptives, and their ineffectiveness, in the case of the rhythm method, respondents would also be

unsure of the effectiveness of the methods which fall somewhere in between these two extremes. Again, the implication for the church is clear. Education is badly needed in the field of contraceptive methods.

Methodist social concerns leaders are very much in agreement with the official position of the Methodist Church on the question of planned parenthood. The statement is a sound one and now needs to be backed up by programs of positive action originating within the church.

There can be no question that these leaders are ready for some type of action program in the field of population explosion and planned parenthood. They agree wholeheartedly that the church can play a significant role in solving the population problem. In general they agree that seminary curriculums should include training in the field of counseling for planned parenthood. Parishoners ought to be able to turn with confidence to their ministers in a matter as personal and as important as that of family planning. Then too, the Methodist Church as an institution should support the work of reputable planned parenthood agencies and clinics where such agencies are already in existence. Where they do not exist the church should involve itself in helping organize such clinics. It is the hope of this writer that the proper agencies within the Methodist Church will seriously consider these suggestions, and further that something positive will

result.

Perhaps the first step is official church sponsorship of a study of the population explosion, planned parenthood, and their implications for Christian families. The social concerns leaders surveyed in this study indicate their support of this sort of study. The suggestion of this writer is that study materials in this area be prepared by the General Board of Christian Social Concerns of the Methodist Church for church-wide use. The sooner such a study is undertaken, the sooner will other positive steps be taken, and the sooner will the church begin to assume its responsibility in the field of population control.

The calculation of readiness scores indicates a significant degree of "readiness" on the part of the vast majority of the respondents. It is especially true that annual conferences within the North Central, Northeastern, and Western Jurisdictions are ready to support virtually any positive action program in the field of population control and planned parenthood which might be sponsored by the Methodist Church. Even among respondents in the Central, South Central, and Southeastern Jurisdictions, the readiness level is significantly high. Perhaps a program of education is somewhat more seriously needed in these southern jurisdictions.

While the test of the difference between means

indicates a significant difference between the "mean readiness scores" of laymen and ministers, as well as between the various age groups, it is our conclusion that whatever differences exist present no obstacle to a positive action program in this area on the part of the church. Such a program should be acceptable to both sexes, all age groups, and to laymen and ministers alike.

It is the sincere hope of the writer that the church will assume the leadership in the struggle against over-population. Our social concerns leaders are aware of the significance of the population explosion, they are convinced of the acceptability and desirability of the use of contraception in planning families and in limiting the size of families, and they are ready to support and promote church sponsored programs dealing with the population explosion and planned parenthood for Christian families. The question which now remains is whether or not the church is willing to respond with positive leadership.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### Facsimile of Cover Letter

Dear Friend:

One of the important current movements in the field of Christian social concerns is in the direction of a clearer understanding of world population growth, planned parenthood and their relationship to Protestant Christians.

Because of the importance of this problem, the Division of Temperance and General Welfare of the General Board of Christian Social Concerns of the Methodist Church has awarded me a research grant for a study in this area. This study will also become part of my doctoral dissertation at the Southern California School of Theology. The enclosed questionnaire comes to you as part of this research.

This questionnaire is being sent to a scientifically selected sample of members of Annual Conference Boards of Christian Social Concerns. It is therefore highly important that each person selected return the questionnaire. Please take the few minutes necessary to complete the questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed reply envelope. Please be assured that your answers will be treated anonymously, and your confidence will be carefully respected.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Inlay



Facsimile of the Questionnaire

1. General Information

A. Layman \_\_\_\_\_ Minister \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. Age: Under 35 \_\_\_\_\_ 35-55 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 55 \_\_\_\_\_  
 C. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

| What is your opinion about each of the following statements?                                                                                                                                     | Strongly Agree | Agree | No Opinion | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 2. The pressure of over-population is one of the chief causes of international tension and modern war.                                                                                           |                |       |            |          |                   |
| 3. If the United States is to provide any foreign aid to a nation, that aid should include technical and financial assistance in the field of planned parenthood to those nations requesting it. |                |       |            |          |                   |
| 4. If population growth continues at its present rate of increase, the population of the world will be more than double what it is now by the year 2000.                                         |                |       |            |          |                   |
| 5. Oral contraception is an effective means of preventing conception.                                                                                                                            |                |       |            |          |                   |
| 6. The use of contraception in planning families is immoral and should never be undertaken by Christian couples.                                                                                 |                |       |            |          |                   |
| 7. Because of the rapidly increasing rate of population growth, the world faces the very real danger of a widening gap between food supply and the demand for food.                              |                |       |            |          |                   |
| 8. The rhythm or "safe period" method of birth control has proven to be an effective means of preventing conception.                                                                             |                |       |            |          |                   |
| 9. The church can play <u>no</u> significant role in solving the problem of the world's over-population.                                                                                         |                |       |            |          |                   |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                | Strongly<br>Agree | Agree | No<br>Opinion | Disagree | Strongly<br>Disagree |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|---------------|----------|----------------------|
| 10. The rate of world population growth is <u>not</u> so great as to warrant wide-spread public concern.                                                                                       |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 11. Planned parenthood, practiced in Christian conscience, fulfills rather than violates the will of God.                                                                                      |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 12. The Methodist Church should support the work of reputable planned parenthood agencies and clinics.                                                                                         |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 13. Methodist ministers should receive seminary training preparing them to give planned parenthood information and advice to those couples desiring it in pre-marital or marital counseling.   |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 14. The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of the population explosion and its implications for Christians.                                                                   |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 15. The Methodist Church should strive to establish planned parenthood clinics and agencies where such a service is not available.                                                             |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 16. Methodist Annual Conference pronouncements should more frequently include resolutions in the field of world population problems.                                                           |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 17. The Methodist Church should sponsor a church-wide study of planned parenthood for Christian families.                                                                                      |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| 18. Please list below any projects which you think can and should be undertaken by the Methodist Church with regard to the population explosion and planned parenthood for Christian families. |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| <hr/>                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| <hr/>                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |       |               |          |                      |
| <hr/>                                                                                                                                                                                          |                   |       |               |          |                      |

19. Rank the following social problems as to the urgency of their solution. Write "1" before the problem you consider most urgent, and so on through "6" before the problem you consider least urgent.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Race relations within the United States
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ International tensions
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Use of alcohol and tobacco
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ World population growth
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ Juvenile delinquency
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ Poverty in the world

20. Which of the following statements most closely represents your understanding of the purpose of the marital sex act. Check one only.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ The only purpose of the marital sex act is the procreation of children.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ The primary purpose of the marital sex act is the procreation of children.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ The primary purpose of the marital sex act is the mutual expression of human love.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ Procreation and the mutual expression of love share equally as the purposes of the marital sex act.

21. For which of the following reasons would you use contraception to prevent a pregnancy in marriage? Check as many as you accept.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ If a pregnancy would seriously endanger the health of the mother.
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ If another child would make it difficult to provide the necessities of food, clothing, housing, and education for the family.
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ If another child would require reduction in the standard of living which you associate with the middle or upper class way of life.
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ If career or vocational training or demands require planned parenthood.
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ If you desire to space the arrival of children.
  - F. \_\_\_\_\_ Because of the problem of the rapidly increasing world population.
  - G. \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)
- 
- 
-

22. Which of the following methods of contraception do you consider morally proper for use by a married Christian couple? Check as many as you accept.

- A. ☐ Diaphragm
- B. ☐ Foams, jellies, suppositories
- C. ☐ Oral contraceptives
- D. ☐ Rhythm method or "safe period"
- E. ☐ Condom
- F. ☐ Withdrawal
- G. ☐ Abstinence
- H. ☐ Other (please specify)

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